

THE NATURE OF MANAGEMENT WORK.

LOUISE PREGET

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Bournemouth University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.**

April 1993

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Abstract

The thesis contributes to an understanding of the nature of Managerial work, confronting the work in its natural setting. It offers an empirically grounded description of the social organisation of managerial work; it explores the taken for granted features of managers' work that allows members to recognise and reproduce their normal everyday activities amid the variability and complexity that comprises their days work. The study finds managerial work to be a primarily verbal activity; accessible through a study of interaction. Resources of Conversation Analysis are utilised to explore how the managers use talk to accomplish their activities and to expose and test their understanding. An ethnographically informed approach reveals that the social organisation of the work is inextricable from local, referential matters.

The thesis is presented in two parts. Part 1 explores the 'insitu' accomplishment of a number of activities within selected instances of managerial work; a memo, a discussion of future work plans and a strategic planning meeting. It finds and demonstrates how such work as negotiating a position, identifying a problem, reaching agreement is not just the outcome of a sequential organisation but of a retrospective-prospective design. Phenomena such as 'planning' and 'organising' are appropriated at the interactional level. They are found to be achieved in the insitu accomplishment of various conversational features; agreement and modification amongst others, through an understanding of local contingencies such as time scales for projects, the personalities involved, and by practices of description and explanation. Part 2 takes up an interest, begun in Part 1, with occasions when the managers offer explanations of their work. The ability to "talk about management" is found to be a competence essential to the accomplishment of a number of managerial activities such as working up plans, making sensible a proposal. A number of occasions where particular managers offer verbal 'tours' of their work are explored. Not only does this reveal something of how accounts get done, but it brings into the public domain some of the 'commonsense understandings' that the managers orientate to in shaping up a telling of their work. Attention to these 'espoused logics', 'lines of regard' is important in terms of developing an adequate theory of the organisation of managerial work. It could be on the basis of these 'practical theories' that the managers work proceeds, that particular decisions get taken, plans are agreed etc.

Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted to Dr David Jones for the advice and support that not only guided this work but inspired my interest in ethnomethodologically informed studies. A gratitude I extend to other colleagues, in particular Dr David Golding of Humberside University.

I am also grateful for the endless support and encouragement of my family, particularly my parents, my husband Philippe and my friends who suffered with me the 'highs and lows' of the research endeavour.

*"There is something I don't know
that I am supposed to know.
I don't know what it is I don't know,
and yet am supposed to know,
and I feel stupid if I seem both not to know it
and not know what it is I don't know.
Therefore I pretend I know it.
This is nerve-racking
since I don't know what I must pretend to know.
Therefore I pretend to know everything".*

R.D.Laing

Chapter 1- Introduction

The thesis represents an empirical study which offers a description of selected features of senior management work. It came about as the result of a study into the nature of senior management funded by what is now Bournemouth University. As a consequence the study focuses on the work of a number of senior managers and the activities that they are found to be engaged in. It treats the practical activities and practical circumstances of their work as topics of study in a tradition which I subsequently identified as ethnomethodological.

The study is based upon data collected from discussion with a dozen or so senior managers and observations of these same managers as they went about their work. The data was collected from field studies over the period 1988-1989. During this period I compiled over a hundred hours of field notes and audio recordings. (The audio tape was invaluable for capturing the spontaneously occurring conversations and for detailing the circumstantial production of the work.)

This study takes as its material data which represents features of the work of five senior managers. For reasons of confidentiality the reader will find I refer to these managers and the Organisations that they worked within by their initials. The fact that the managers are all male is not by design rather it reflects the predominance of males in senior management positions.

During the field work, which was typically 3 or 4 days spend "shadowing" each particular manager as they went about their work, I attempted to learn as much as possible about the managers' world and work. My data collection was multitudinous, including interview, observations, and various Organisational documents the managers referred me to or allowed me to take away. I compiled ethnographic notes and audio tape recordings, the latter mainly of more formally instituted management practices such as meetings.

I had envisaged having a problem of access to the managers and the sites of managerial work¹, but no Organisation or manager refused to co-operate. In fact the managers displayed an openness and enthusiasm for assisting in the research, a point to which I will return in Chapter 5, they made it seem a worthwhile and valuable study. Even in the odd moments of quiet between activities, for example whilst travelling to meetings the managers shared their thoughts and offered clarification as to what I was observing. This in itself was interesting for they seemed motivated to share their thoughts. It seemed this talk about their work organised for them some sense of what they were about.

In the first few months of the research I sought opportunities to make contact with some senior managers seeking to learn as much as possible about their world. Access was gained primarily by letters sent to the heads of personnel within a number of large corporations. There were just two exceptions. One set of contacts arose from my attendance at a conference on 'managerial competencies' and the interest of the personnel director of a large multinational Organisation in the research. He subsequently forwarded a list of a number of senior managers who would be prepared to talk to me. The other was the result of a personal recommendation from a friend who knew of my research to approach a particular manager in the Organisation in which she worked on the grounds that he "possessed a quite fascinating style."

All the managers occupied senior positions and worked in large, successful, established Organisations, oriented to service provision. Yet in terms of character, background and experience I consider them to be a disparate collection. Though their work was similar in the magnitude of demands it placed upon them, the key concerns facing each manager on a daily basis seemed radically different.

What was a problem and one which I expect many researchers, particularly in the ethnomethodological area face, was how was I going to convey to these practitioners the general sense of a complex research paradigm? It was a problem which to my surprise never really arose, it appeared that the specifics of the research was not of any great interest to the managers. They were immediately willing to talk about themselves and seemed only minimally concerned with exploring why I should be interested in them. Several, however, suggested that any attempt to understand "what management consisted in" would be "like trying to find the holy grail."

At the beginning of the research relationship I arranged an introductory meeting of one or two hours, to exchange information on my study and their work. At this meeting I asked the manager to talk about his work, his company and himself, this was frequently supported by written information particularly Organisational charts and job descriptions. I initially saw these occasions as a means to gain some preliminary education as to their

position and role, subsequently I realised it was also providing me with some limited competencies with which to make sense of their world.

During the meeting subsequent visits were arranged, the patterns of which were particular to each manager, ranging from ad hoc half day visits to four days of continuous observation. I was the managers "shadow," always there, whether they were at their desks reading the mail, talking in the corridor or attending meetings. For those others in whose world I also became involved, my presence was accepted, as long as I was introduced by the managers. Introductions which typically took the line of "she's all right," "not a competitor", or "an assessor." Indeed in many situations it seemed they either treated me, sometimes mistakenly as one of them, or were oblivious to my presence. Quite clearly being observed, having a visitor present during their work was not some new experience. During these visits my time was spent observing and discretely taking notes & audio recordings in the naive hope of capturing something of what management was about. Attempts to organise these notes however proved problematic and made me recognise that identifying just what constituted managerial work was not an easy task.

The literature on management work

In order for the reader to understand how my analysis proceeds and why it is that I have chosen to work up from conversational and ethnographic materials to an account of the interior production of selected activities, it is necessary to do at least two things in the introduction. Firstly to explore how the research positions itself within the body of literature on managerial work already existing and secondly how the line of enquiry pursued emerged. It is the positioning of the literature that this section is concerned with. This is where the research began.

The section provides reference to a selection of the dominant studies within management theory. Examining these provides more than just a rudimentary education in management. Attending to those studies already in place provides a base to move off from and reveals the gaps in our current understanding of managerial work. It is the recognition of such deficiencies, and the development of a sound methodological approach with which to address these that is a concern informing my study.

It was with an examination of the literature that I began the research in a manner befitting someone beginning research in an area new to them. This early review proved difficult. A vast array of studies existed and offered much as a way of developing an understanding of the pattern of management work. Here there is time only for a brief résumé of the insights they afford. To this end I point the reader who is interested in a more focused examination of approaches that have predominated management thought to the work of Reed (1990). In brief the work I do here points to features that lead me to the conclusion

that in the main the relationships of the theories of management to the real phenomena of management is tenuous and unclear. To explore them is, I suggest, to look in an opaque manner at what observation finds to be a complex collection of activities. Reviewing the literature led me to develop a concern that the theory of management needed to move on and to explore new interests.

I was to find this concern supported by Willmott (1987), in two stimulating and critical papers he calls for research which offered alternative accounts. Though I do not follow his suggestions as to the direction in which management research should develop his criticisms provide a number of guidelines as to what would be inadequate research.

The criticism Willmott (1984,7) levels at students of managerial work is that they

"mostly embellished or partially revised the abstract functions of management identified in traditional theory" (1984 , pg. 349)

For Willmott his concern was that management was

"widely (mis)represented and idealised as a technical, politically neutral activity" (1984 pg 350)

and inadequately accounted for at the institutional level. Such criticisms lead Willmott to form an approach which I found wanting in terms of my own project a point to which I will subsequently return.

However, Willmott's (1987) concern for the manner in which the nature of management has been represented, his criticism of the "images & ideals" offered by management theory, heightened my sensitivity in reading the major empirical studies of management. In parallel with reviewing the literature I had begun the field research. In discussing & observing the managers I, like Willmott found myself asking the question - how far do these studies mirror the activities that comprise the managers daily work? What I was becoming increasingly more interested in was the sense of managerial work as it appeared for the managers themselves.

It seemed, that as Willmott (1987) suggests, in the literature the common-sense images developed by managers to account for their activities frequently get taken on board by the researcher's resulting in second-order descriptions of the work. This made me consider two issues; whether as a researcher one really knew what these common-sense images were which the managers supposedly held; and secondly how useful they were in representing the situated activity of management.

Having made such a strong declaration of my position; the concern to capture management work as experienced by the managers themselves, it is necessary to return to a review of the literature in order to provide some justification for the stance I adopt. I

also wish to clarify my position. I was not questioning the usefulness of the classical theories with respect to offering insights into managerial work and as a basis for management education². Indeed I might go so far as to suggest that a weakness of Willmott's paper is his failure to attend to the positive contributions that they provide. From our present position some half a century later it is all too easy to couch a review of them in terms of methodological inadequacy and unsatisfactory description.

Something of an understanding of managerial work can be found both in theoretical approaches of the early management theorists and the empirical studies and popular management texts (the later sources largely unexplored here). My concern was with the value of existing frameworks/ approaches to the researcher interested in capturing the "experienced reality of management." For at another level it was difficult to square the images the literature offered with those I found my own initial experiences in the managers work context revealed, and as elicited by the managers themselves.

In the main the classical sources are reflected in the work of Fayol (1949), Barnard (1938), Dalton (1957) and Mintzberg (1973). Examination of these finds that they make a contribution of a different order to our understanding of managerial work.

Fayol (1949) in the tradition of Taylor attends to the managers responsibility for the
"rational design of the administrative structures of work organisation"

His contribution is the identification of a number of principles of administration placing emphasis on the personal and social responsibilities of management. This unproblematic identification of principles of work seemed to me to stand at odds with his claim that there is nothing rigid or absolute in management affairs and that one should make allowance for different and changing circumstances.

The study represents a tendency amongst management writers to recast the substantial elements of managerial work into models of their, as theorists, construction; & thus I suggest trivialises, to some degree, the sense one has on observing it. Much research since Fayol recognises that what management work entails is of a loosely defined order and is susceptible to choice of both style and content (Stewart (1976). But how the managers accomplish an order to their social affairs or even what adequate description of this looks like did not appear to have been developed.

Barnard (1938) appears less concerned with identifying rules and principles of work organisation. His research reveals the social and psychological grounds of formal Organisation and seems to begin to recognise the manager's role in maintaining & communicating the appearance of the co-operative system. From him we learn the primary task of the manager is to develop an effective "fit" between the Organisation's

purpose and its environment; and secondly the adjusting of the formal structure of the Organisation. One has the sense of the manager as active within the work Organisation. But how these universal characteristics manifest themselves in the daily programme is left to our imagination.

As one of the most acclaimed empirical studies of work, Mintzberg's (1973) analysis, based upon a study of five chief executives draws attention to the gap between theory and knowledge of the actual practices of management. To explain his findings Mintzberg builds upon role theory to advance a contingency view of managerial work in which variations between the ten managerial roles that he identifies are attributed to the deterministic influence of four variables: environmental, job, person, situational. The study represents management work as a set of discrete, observable activities which I suggest by so doing removes much of the live and relational nature of management, revealing again a preference on the part of the researchers for representing managerial work by second order constructs. What I also noted was that Mintzberg fails to reveal the process of inductive reasoning in the research process. The particular values and interests he had as researcher, and the common-sense resources he employed are concealed. Finally the notion of role is itself static, and as such Mintzberg fails to reveal how these roles are enacted, how the managers and Organisational others interact.

It was in the work of Dalton (1959) that I found the most revealing account. Dalton's research interest in the position of the individual manager and how he personally reconciles all

"the conflicting interests and values around him,"

begins to place the manager as actor on centre stage.

Dalton appears ahead of his time too, in his concern for the informal aspects of Organisational life; recognising the social and political processes of management life. He attempts to 'reconcile rational, emotional, social and ethical claims' (ibid pg 258) with recognition of the interactional nature of the work. Although Dalton does not attend in any great depth to how management work appears in the day to day activities one can sense that the manager is beginning to assume a more central role.

What Dalton does make is an important point about closed research. His preference for 'idea over number', his "confessional," concern for method, makes a place for explicitness in the research writing. It cautions the researcher against framing hypothesis before exploring a situation. Indeed, later, in developing a research design I was to find his work ³ influential in terms of presenting a case for exploratory research which seeks to work up discoveries from 'hunches'.

Exploration of the literature on management confirms the fact that theories of management, in the main offer theoretically, as opposed to empirically induced conceptualisations of the managers' world, viewing the world of management through categories of their own, as researcher's construction. Reviewing the literature on management work led me to align with Willmott's view that concerns to subsume features into these typologies have taken precedence over adequate description. To recognise his suggestion of a new approach/ challenge, one that needed to deal with what other theories had failed to attend to. What I did not align with was Willmott's suggestions as to how this might be done. The focus of Willmott's analysis is on social relations as fundamentally contested, and managerial action as explained by cultural & ideological values. For me such questions were premature given his claim that thus far only 'images and ideals' of management had been offered. One might suggest Willmott himself was in danger of idealising the political aspect as much as those prominent and influential studies he critiques, seeing managerial activity as structurally / institutionally determined. The contribution of his work is in terms of awakening interest in the idea of management as an activity. What for me was needed was some preliminary empirical work.

My interest narrowed to a concern to find studies which captured the strategies by which the managers organised their lives and accomplished their work? Kotter's (1982) study exploring the work of fifteen senior managers appeared on an initial reading to overcome a number of the limitations inherent in earlier approaches.

Kotter talks of "getting inside" descriptions of activities undertaken or roles played in order to see how managers maintain their relationships with others. This held the promise of a study that did not rely on categories of researchers' construction to reveal the work and which offered insight into the interactional aspects of the work. However Kotter too chooses to offer second order constructs by which the observed behaviour may be understood and to handle the interactional aspects of the work by attention to interpersonal networks. He is not sensitive to the construction of these managers accounts, nor at a more fundamental level for whom they are constructed. I was sensitive again to learning about managerial work at a level removed from its moment by moment accomplishment. Kotter highlights significant features that exist but does not take the reader into how these are done, as routine accomplishments in the practical settings.

Kotter's work on a methodological note was interesting for its concern with the actors' perspective, the managers' accounts. His research design and interest in qualitative method stimulated at this stage an interest in whether there was a place for accounts in terms of advancing an understanding of managerial work. His concluding remarks reveal insight into the influences of method on research, albeit in a less introspective/ attentive style than Dalton had offered some 25 years before.

I was not convinced that Kotter had worked up an effective way of analysing members' accounts and indeed this programme might be seen as taking up the challenge he lays out but does not address. This challenge is to work from within the managers' world. A challenge which in terms of my own research was to become a direct examination of what managers were doing in their daily work.

Trujillo (1983) moves closer to exploring the managers' world in his concern for showing situationally variable interactions whereby managers and other Organisational members construct senses of Organisational reality. Informed by Goffman the interaction is described using the metaphor of "performances". However, one might be critical of this for undervaluing the recognisability of the natural organisation in daily Organisational life. Trujillo's reliance upon the metaphor of performance one might suggest distances the work from the actual sites of practical reasoning & from revealing the detail of the activities accomplishment.

The study fails to take one into the "contemporaneous achievement" of the work of the particular occasion he explores. Nor does it attend to first order constructs of the actor. Instead, it too, finds illustrative material to support second order constructs. What Trujillo does offer is consideration of managers' actual, observable behaviour which moves towards an interest in exploring the situated activities of management. What he does not do is treat the managers' observable behaviours as accomplishments. He does not ask why or how they are brought about?

Jackall (1988) offers an interpretative study of the world of corporate managers examining the occupational ethics and 'moral rules in use' they follow to survive and succeed in bureaucratic systems. Although insightful Jackall fails to locate his assertion that one has access to managerial work through an exploration of its moral rules other than by the provision of abstracted details from selected occasions of management talk and text.

Frequently one finds in exploring the literature that one is offered "images" of management⁴, which derive from the conception of management held by the researcher (Jackall 1988) or at best synopses of what the managers themselves have to say (Kanter 1990). Indeed one might go as far as to say that the work is characterised by the replacement of the phenomena of management by 'artefacts' of method. The result is that the dynamic of the activity is lost. In order to make sense of existing management studies one has to invoke what anyone knows of management, to rely on one's common-sense understandings.

Present studies did not appear to offer access to the practical achievement of management that I was observing in the day to day work. Frequently they made the activity of

management seem unproblematic, methodic and detached from individual competencies and motives, failing to capture how given the brevity and fragmented nature of management the work was somehow organised and accomplished. What I was interested in doing was finding a way to provide a study which was not disengaged from the daily practices of management, that did not offer decontextualised versions of the work. Just how this study differs from existing studies is made apparent in subsequent sections, its main difference however is in taking a closer interest in the locally organised details of particular management activities

It occurred to me that from the point of view of the theory identified so far one can talk of the role of the manager where the actual individuals themselves are more or less interchangeable and the contextual features of the particular occasion are abstracted, where the 'character' of the activities is lost. However, from the point of view of the managers when dealing with a real life management activity, the individuals and circumstances are anything but interchangeable. What seemed to have been missed by existing studies was a concern for the particularities of the occasion.

Exploring the literature it seemed that there was a further area for such a study to contribute to an understanding of management. I was struck by the contribution of the social action studies and the interest in the perspective of the actor within management theory, albeit that they are rather limited in number. I am thinking here of such studies as Silverman & Jones (1976), Gowler & Legge (1985) and Anderson, Hughes and Sharrock (1989). It occurred to me that the small number of studies in this area was perhaps a reflection of the dominance of quantitative approaches in the social sciences⁵ which have not been interested in members accounts. It seemed what was needed was the development of an adequate analytical approach; one that moved away from the current tendency to rely on second order description.

The conclusion of my review of the management literature finds little visibility accorded to the kinds of activities that I saw on entering the world of management. The complex organisation of the work that observation had revealed was not accommodated by the literature. It seemed I could not find any reliable answer to first order empirical questions as to what managerial activity consists in. This surely was an area to be taken seriously, an opportunity for the research to focus on the methods, procedures, practices etc. that the managers themselves used to construct and make sense of their work, to capture the "lived reality". It was this realisation rather than any methodological preferences or philosophical position that led to this studies preoccupations.

Thus the interest is not in identifying the typical patterns that similar sorts of managerial activities fall into. On the contrary the interest is to explore by empirical analysis the accomplishment of particular activities. A concern which Hales (1986) amongst others

voices in his suggestion that second order normative statements of managerial effectiveness presuppose the existence of adequate enquiry at the empirical level. It is such a first order empirical study that I seek to offer.

At the same time as I was reviewing the literature I was exploring the potential research methods that I might adopt, reading amongst others the work of Garfinkel (1967) and Lynch (1985). Although I shall return to this point later this early reading was instrumental in determining the shape that the subsequent research was to take.

Initial research questions.

From these preliminary readings and the ideas they generated emerged a number of initial questions.

1. How could one offer a study more faithful to the recognisable features of management work?
2. What kind of materials, yielding what kind of results would be appropriate for such a study?
3. To what extent could research which remained sensitive to the managers' understanding of their work advance a theory of management? A theory which did not ignore the fact that the development of an understanding of management work is approach dependent .
4. Just what would an appropriate approach be? What would be the relevant methods of enquiry for the particular objects of enquiry (Bittner 1973)

Answering these questions was no easy task. The data that I collected at the beginning of the research, both by talking with the managers about their work and by observing the daily practices in which their work consisted, seemed to suggest a distinction between the way in which the managers accounted for their work, the images that theory produced and the observations I had made of the works' accomplishment; a distinction that had been little recognised by those interested in exploring the features of managerial life. In Argyris' (1957) terms one could distinguish 'logics in use' from a set of 'espoused logics' offered upon a request for explanation.

I was sensitive to the fact that the appearance of management as a study of its naturally organised features and its appearance to the managers themselves might be different. I saw this difference as interesting for how it might explain something of the problems which occur in the literature. One problem was the tendency to "short circuit the building of social theory" by reliance upon what the people within Organisations are assumed to mean when they talk about their work. This, identified by Bittner (1973) as a problem for the theory of Organisation, is I suggest also applicable to the theories of management. This is to suggest that implicit assumptions are made about a certain management action

at the same time as knowledge of how managers behave in doing that activity is being investigated. This is taken prematurely to be proof that the theoretical statements made about the activity are accurate and leads to investigations of the management world by researchers who already have their theoretical interest in place, building upon what 'Organisationally situated actors' are assumed to mean by the particular concepts they employ to make sensible their world. The study seeks to be sensitive to this, recognising that it is easy to assume one as researcher has appropriated the 'natural attitude' of the manager. However, this sensitivity in itself provides a further trouble. As Bittner (1973 pg 123) says

“ the more (the fieldworker) relies on his sensitivity as an observer who has seen first hand how variously things can be perceived, the less likely he is to perceive those traits of depth, stability and necessity that people recognise as actually inherent in the circumstances of their existence.”

There is it appears a tension between having a competence in the field understudy that allows one to make sense of what is going on, whilst simultaneously needing to make oneself remote for fear of imposing ones own 'scheme of relevancies' upon the description of events.

Although I initially did not take this interest any further it occurred to me that this distinction between 'logics in use' in the daily work and the managers 'espoused logics,' in particular those given to a researcher, did not necessarily mean disregarding the approach to management work which centres on the actors' perspective. Instead it required a sensitivity to the fact that such an approach might prove to show an interest in different things.

To expand this point here is to have moved beyond my present concern for I have chosen in this introduction to offer the reader an account of the research along biographical lines in order to reveal something of the nature of the research process.

Before I attend to the line of enquiry I took, I want to explore something much more fundamental that was beginning to surface. That was how one might observe managerial work. To return to Bittner's point, given that the object of enquiry was the nature of managerial work, what would count as a record of such work and how could one get access to it?

There were records of the work on the managers desks; memos, reports and other data formats. There was their talk, not just talk about their work to me, but talk in the work, as the work of meetings and discussions. Returning to the practicalities of the research I explored the data that I had collected thus far. This data consisted of three main sources.

- 1) Actual occasions of management activity that I had audio recorded and observed.
- 2) The Organisational documents such as memos and reports the managers had given me.
- 3) The verbal 'tours' they had offered me.

An interest in talk emerges

The majority of the data that I collected was captured in verbal form. The literature suggests that the managers world is indeed a

“Verbal, specifically oral one” Davis & Luthans 1980 pg 5.

If this is so then verbal activity could in part at least afford an insight into managerial work. It was interesting to observe that whilst many studies⁶ recognise management as a primarily verbal activity (Stewart (1976), Davis & Luthans (1980), Kotter (1982), Jackall (1988) Kanter (1990)) there was no sustained attempt in the literature to explore this for development of a theory of management.

In terms of developing a piece of research that made visible management work it occurred to me that in listening to their talk I was learning about their world, and it seemed reasonable that an exploration of talk could reveal something of the work? Thus an initial hypothesis was that a study of conversation has something to contribute to an understanding of the nature of management practice.

But how could one go about addressing such records to reveal the works' observable and reportable detail in a way which did not adulterate the phenomenon? (This question I deal with later in this introduction in discussing the methodological approach. As I go on to explore the perspectives of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis reveal a specific connection with such phenomena.)

A focus for the enquiry

In order to develop these interests I needed a focus for the enquiry. Returning to the literature on management and those who had been interested in a broadly Social Action approach two papers were instrumental in shaping the research; that of Spencer & McAuley (1980) and Gowler & Legge (1985).

For Gowler and Legge management may be viewed essentially as an oral tradition, their interest in language being its role in the construction of reality through the “management of meaning.” For Spencer and McAuley it offers a resource to explore managers 'common sense understandings' and theories of their work. Both, albeit in traditions and with interests far removed from each other, rely on verbal accounts as a means to afford insights into the actors' orientation and rationalisation of their work.

When I began to consider the epistemological & methodological issues of operationalising such research a misgiving began to surface, in particular the relationship between language, understanding and social action. To document the ideological tools and belief structures in the manner of Gowler & Legge was to assume an interpretational

competence and to rely upon an assumption that we already adequately know how the managers understand their world and the kinds of concerns to which they bring such tools. It is to rely upon an assumption that the managers exhibit a self conscious and predominant concern with the “management of meaning” through their talk. An approach concerned with a subtext and view that action had some deeper meaning.

It was Spencer & McAuley developing a different line of reasoning, who suggested a possible approach to give access to the managers' world. They argue persuasively that it was possible to produce insightful description by exploring the “characterisations” the managers themselves place upon their work. By their sensitivity to the artifice of their own research process they move some way in raising the problems seemingly unnoticed by theorists such as Kotter, of reliance upon accounts as a means to explore features of management life. I had similar data, the talk in the introductory meetings were occasions where the managers offered accounts of their work. The question was did their attempt to demonstrate an approach to theory building reliant on accounts provide a path for empirical study and would such an approach afford adequate access to the nature of managerial work? The answer to this was to become apparent only upon analysis.

The point that captured my attention in their paper was their recognition of the need to be “actor oriented,” (Geertz 1975), to follow his suggestion when looking at management that one should be sensitive to the 'constructions' the managers place upon what they do, the formulae they use to define it. It is as Sharrock & Anderson (1982/3) note that

“ the meaning of action is given by the way it is understood.”

It is by definition only the actor who can make a first order description and who can shed light on the set of 'relevancies' that they hold.

The implications for me as researcher was a suggestion that one has to learn how to appropriately and competently describe the setting and that this has to be learnt from the managers themselves.⁷ So to pause and reflect on the position of my research I had identified an interest in managerial talk, and in the actors' perspective. What remained was a concern for which instances of talk I should focus on; talk to me or talk as it appeared in the daily work?

The dilemma was only resolved by the process of the research. As I mentioned earlier my initial interest was with naturally occurring occasions of instances of management. It seemed on listening to the audio tapes of such occasions that in fact a “telling” is also done during and over the course of the managers' daily life and as an integral part of it. But to take the reader back in the history of the research, what the outcome of exploring the accounts would be was still not so clear. Just how might one might handle the managers accounts so as to remain faithful to the managers experiences?

Further, could the insights afforded by the managers in talking with me provide an adequate insight into their work? In terms of arriving at a means to enter the particular occasions of the works accomplishment it still seemed they were not the best way forward. I made the decision to continue with data I had which offered a record of more recognisably managerial occasions of work; talk in the meetings, or around their desks that could be used to examine the nexus of instances of managerial work?

When I had asked the managers themselves how an accountably adequate plan of future work was produced and recognised, how are the memos constructed so as to request advice or inform of a budget overspend without taking explicit responsibility they could not tell me. They did not appear to have had cause to articulate in such terms what their work consisted in. They could not delineate what made a memo a memo. They took for granted the methods by which an activity made sense to them.

It occurred to me that though one might be able to understand what managers mean by characterisations such as "planning," what it is as an accomplishment within the course of management remained unavailable, I was not going to learn by asking them how it is practically produced.⁸

To clarify my position I had identified two lines of analytic interest. Firstly, to explore the interactional features of managerial work and the manner of its practical accomplishment. It was with this interest that my research begins. Second an interest in the managers 'orientations' to their work.

Initially, it seemed an interest in managers' accounts and in practical activities might reflect two different focuses of enquiry. Indeed this seemed supported by preliminary research, for on observing the managers I found that without their explanations it was still the case that "some how" they and I knew what they were recognisably about. This sense of what was going on was not so much from any imported sense, as from some accountability that the activity under observation brought. When in the literature I tried to find answers to such questions as what this recognisability consisted in, a gap was visible. It was those studies concerned with the detailed description of locally produced order that appeared to give a visibility to the occasions under study. I am thinking of amongst others Lynch's (1985) study of a science laboratory and Sharrock and Andersons (1982) paper on talk and teaching.

The reader may already sense that my thinking is reflecting a growing understanding of the work of Garfinkel (1967) and his associates. It was in reading Garfinkel's work that it occurred to me that the managers might not be infallible theorists of their own practice. The work they do in recognising their own activities may itself be taken for granted. As Schutz (1962) points out, for the most part in our daily life we do not need to be

concerned with the fullness of our knowledge; we only need sufficient for the purposes at hand. This was supported by the managers inability to detail exactly what made for example planning, planning. Quite clearly the managers took for granted certain aspects of their work.

This might have led me to set aside my interest in the managers accounts, especially given that they are found to be indexically tied⁹ to the occasion of their production. If meaning is always indexical (Garfinkel 1967); that is to say dependent on the occasion of usage what was the status of members' accounts alongside an examination of the activities themselves? The context of a research interview was inevitably different from the situated occasions of the daily work. Indeed the accounts did not tie up easily with my observation of management activities. This later point was to lead to some stimulating questions. Initially just how if at all I might be interested in accounts was not so clear. Though it did occur to me that the accounts were themselves activities, that is to say occasions of "doing accounting" any problems of indexicality and reciprocity had to be resolved by the managers themselves in the occasions themselves. It was only after I pursued an interest in the practical accomplishment of particular occasions that I realised that the occasions of account making provided a point of entry into domains I had overlooked; the detailed organisation of the managers' practical reasoning.

It is I am sure apparent that I had begun to assimilate the ideas of a body of literature recognised as ethnomethodology. These studies are noticeable for their attempt to situate themselves within the work they describe. I wish to attend, at this point in the introduction to the central preoccupation's of ethnomethodology for it is frequently subject to being misconstrued. For the purpose of explanation it seems prudent to separate these issues, though during the actual research process they were interrelated.

Why I choose to introduce this here is that it was in exploring the perspective of ethnomethodology that I became aware that my interest in the accomplishment of the work itself as naturally occurring activity, and the account of the work that the managers offered actually pointed to two opportunities for my research. Both were potentially interesting and revealing of the work of management. Of course in practice if I wanted to develop a systematic piece of research I had to start the analysis somewhere. The analysis begins with an interest in the daily activities of management. Given a concern with the status of the members' accounts and a recognition that the "contemporaneous achievement" of management as it unfolds in daily activities had thus far eluded capture the fundamental focus for the research was the ordinary sites of management work. But as must inevitably be the case with research there was not a simple linear way forward.

Ethnomethodology & Conversation Analysis

This section seeks to reveal something of how the approaches of Conversation Analysis (CA) and ethnomethodology contribute to this study.¹⁰ The contribution of ethnomethodology to our understanding of social action is however best understood by an examination of exemplary studies.¹¹

Those familiar with ethnomethodology will have recognised that my own research interest is concerned to operate from within the occasion of management described. It is oriented to a similar programme to that of ethnomethodology, which seeks to identify, the "endogenous" features of the specific activity under study.

Ethnomethodological concerns are somewhat different from traditional sociological description. Ethnomethodologists treat the very activity of "representing social reality" as the topic of enquiry. There is a concern to go to the sites of the works practical accomplishment, in this instance of managerial work. A recognition that an understanding of an activity is dependent on the methods members use to make sense of the activity.

The promise of the ethnomethodological approach in studying work activities, had been the focus of a number of prior studies aptly referred to as the studies of work programme.¹² Despite the various epistemological strands those such as Atkinson (1988) might see as coexisting within this programme, these "Studies of Work" are, in the words of Lynch (1985 pg 6) all distinguished

"by their concern to operate from within the competence systems they describe."

What I was to find was that, with the exception of Anderson, Hughes & Sharrock (1989) no one had attended to management along the lines of this approach. Ethnomethodology thus offered an approach sensitive to the "taken for granted features" of the managers' world, and which sought to open up these common sense understandings of management, as they are exhibited by the managers themselves in the occasions of their work.

Recent work in ethnomethodology is

"characteristic in its use of some general strictures involving the material demonstration of the practices of inquiry studied" (Lynch 1985 pg 6.)

As Lynch suggests the concern is with what counts as an adequate record of naturally occurring instances of conduct. Within the Studies of Work this has tended to be the use of record formats which in some manner recover the visibility of the work in the setting of its accomplishment.

In many settings of management it was the 'embodiment of speech' which provided the work with its visibility; talk in meetings or on the phone. It is also discovered and displayed in textual formats e.g. reports, memos etc. These then provided records for the study. They are not taken to be "descriptive data," but to borrow Lynch's (1985 pg 6) term, "scenic conditions" from which to analyse the work of management.

As Lynch (1985) says of ethnomethodologists

"their description of orderly and socially organised enquiries do not present an opposition between practices described and the practices that make such description possible." pg 6

Within the selected activities of management I had apprehended, my interest which I hope is already clear to the reader, was in attending to/ finding out those things that are indispensable to the staging of the particular activity. I am interested not just in how the work is accomplished in the interactional detail but in the managers' displays of 'practical reasoning'; that is the way the managers themselves structure and make sense of the world of management.¹³

Existing studies of work offered little in the way of analytic techniques and rules for conducting the enquiry, though they offered much in terms of providing exemplary studies, in particular the study by Lynch (1985). Lynch's description of the work of everyday life in a Neuroscience's Laboratory reveals the importance of the researcher attending to the phenomenon of shop talk as an inseparable part of the work. Lynch attends to scientific work as embodied practices in specific settings of conduct, revealing how the technical details of the work exist as an integral part of the social order of the work. His work indicates the value of an analytic approach sensitive to the routine features of managerial work, which he notes in the work of scientists is so often abstracted once the results are established in the theory. Just as these 'technicalities'¹⁴ are the identifying features of scientists' work so it occurred to me that the technicalities of managerial work were integral to the "just whatness" of management.

Lynch explores the shop work of science through an analysis of conversation and his study provided reassurance not only that there was a site of intrinsic interest in exploring talk as integral to the accomplishment of the work but that Conversation Analysis, hereafter CA, offered analytical resources for a study of managerial talk.

The findings of those working in the field of CA offered a set of resources for a study of the work as it is achieved through use of verbal requests, questions, agreements, explanations etc.¹⁵ In order to make sense of the analytic method employed in its investigations it is necessary for the reader to be familiar with the socially organised nature of everyday conversation as described in Conversation Analytic studies.¹⁶

On a methodological note it's reliance upon data captured by audio recording avoided many of the problems faced in data collection. The data is offered to the reader in the form of transcripts. As such the limitations of intuition and recollection, concerns for researcher contamination are reduced; and it permits other researchers direct access to the data about which claims are made. By it's detailed notation it seeks to offer an adequate representation of the occasion of management work, preserving the phenomenon for future inspection of its detail.

Looking at my data I had instances of naturally occurring occasions of management interactions. A question I faced was how to make visible the "materials" involved in accomplishing the work? CA offers generic conversation structures to account for specific features of the settings. So employing these resources it appeared one might be able to describe the role that particular conversational devices play in relation to the specific interactional activity, perhaps even to the managers' work of constructing activities with an "institutional identity" (Lynch pg 77). CA allows access to how interaction is organised, for example, making visible the business meeting, an interview or negotiations as rounds of talk; conversational structures in a distinctive organisation. However, one must be cautious, just because talk occurs in a formal setting doesn't warrant its treatment as institutional (Zimmerman 1992 pg 36).

I was, mindful of Lynch's (1985 pg 9) concern for the "double-edged" nature of Conversation Analytic enquiry. Application of results from studies of conversation might just render the talk visible as conversation, with its structures from "ordinary conversation" or "society in general," while leaving the specific and substantive character of the work being done in and through the conversation unexplicated.

It might well be argued¹⁷ that a study employing resources of CA might reveal much about what the managers in their particular work context do as conversationalists; but that would not reveal what they actually do as managers. This is a critical question, however, as Lynch (1985) says the application of CA's findings to work settings

"cannot fail to generate further analytical specifications that address the work as it actually is" pg 9

Recent research¹⁸ has moved to a position which suggests that CA can be used as a resource to explore aspects of social life, such as work, as socially organised phenomena.

CA has produced many procedures, patterns, organisations, devices, to borrow from Drew (1990) "transcontextual building blocks." Thus if a participant is seen orientating to a particular pattern or device as normative matters, the analyst is able to confirm what he understands is going on by attending to the manner in which a recipient responds. That is to say if we believe an action to be a question, the fact that an answer is provided can be

taken as evidence of our initial assessment. It is not inferential it is factual by virtue of being oriented to by the participants themselves.

So one can expect that the inferences I make as analyst of what is going on are supported by the responses of the receiving manager. How it is interpreted by him offers support for the researchers initial hunch and ensures that what is reported by the researcher, is what the parties to the interaction are orientating to. I am supporting a view of CA that recognises its value not only in identifying the generic properties, patterns and devices of conversation that are visible as accomplishments across occasions and contexts but that it might also accord a visibility to the distinctive or particular work activities. That is to see CA not just as offering resources for an analysis of conversation but for analysis of social organisation through a sequential analysis of occasions of work.

The interest for me would be as to how these abstracted devices of conversation can be demonstrated as integral to the works accomplishment. How the managers orientate to each other reveals how they make sense of one another and fit their utterances to these understandings of their work. How the managers orientate to each other reveals something of the meaning they take from each others utterances and orientations. Each action in sequence inherently displays its producer's interpretation of prior utterances. An interest Drew (1990) refers to as the "demonstrable relevance of the participant."

This interest in the application of CA to management work is supported by its application to other institutional data as seen in the following; Atkinson and Drew (1979), McHoul (1987), Mehan (1979), Atkinson (1982), Drew (1990), Heritage (1984). All point to the fact that institutional interaction involves some specialisation of particular procedures of mundane interactions which have their foundation in ordinary talk. They suggest that it is in the specific, detailed, and local design of turns and sequences that "institutional" contexts are worked up. So it could be that by attending to details of little, local sequences of management activity that earlier research has viewed as narrow, insignificant and contextually uninteresting one might identify the very resources by which larger institutionalised activities are evoked.

An interest in the natural occasions of the managers work is to move towards resolution of the present insensitivity within management theory to what Garfinkel calls the "justwhatness" or "quiddity" of occupational practices. My concern is to attend to the "particularities", the "technicalities" of management in a way adequate to its specificity. However, it may be that as Lynch (1985 pg 77) says of his work that compared with accounts of conversational "devices", my remarks on "features" of managerial work will seem at times rather more conjecturally based.

A line of enquiry emerges

As well as confirming that one could explore the nature of management work through an analysis of conversation Lynch also revived my interest in the managers accounts of their work. Lynch's work was instrumental in providing the idea of distinct modes of discourse within the world of management.

Analytically it seemed I could borrow from Lynch (1985) and identify two distinct modes of discourse; "talk about management" and "talking management." In brief "Talk about management" refers to discourse which showed an explanatory, descriptive format. It occurred to me that the talk to me in those early occasions of meeting was not unlike talk to a colleague. "Talking management" refers to talk which provides the materials for accomplishing an action. It includes such activities as; reporting, decision making, negotiating, agreeing, disagreeing, ordering, announcing. Part 1 finds that these are inseparable from management actions when they occur in the context of collaborative management work.¹⁹

The work of exploring occasions of "talking management" (Part 1) led to a turning point in the research, for I made a significant discovery that led me to reconsider the status of the managers' accounts. This was that analysis of situated activities of management reveals the employment of "description" and "explanation" as a practical resource in the accomplishment of the work.

The discovery was important for it suggests that an interest in members accounts of their work need not be at odds with an interest in naturally occurring activity. Explanation is revealed as an integral competence in the daily work of management, as a way for making sense of what they do for each other or to each other, and understanding revealed as a practical accomplishment.

What I want to suggest here is that out of the analysis of Part 1, Part 2 develops. As I said earlier, in putting aside the data from talk with the managers about their work. I always felt I was excluding something potentially insightful. I felt that I would miss what for the managers were the significant features of their lives, their preferences regarding the organisation of their activities and factors which for them are relevant to understanding what management work consists in.²⁰ However, to be concerned purely with the accounts of managerial work would be to miss the practical accomplishment of the very activities they might be found to talk about.

Lynch does not attend to "talk about the work," in his study of scientists discourse. I was left wondering how, if I wanted to explore it I was to get analytical purchase upon it. It occurred to me that the managers talk with me about their work provided a kind of

discourse which was of importance for the relation of the managers to people operating outside their area of operations; suppliers, customers, other managers, even myself. But what value could such an exploration yield? This is a point to which I will return in a subsequent section. Indeed as the analytical status of such an interest demands more attention than is appropriate for an introduction I devote Chapter 5, to such concerns.

One of the contributions of Garfinkels work (1967) has been to shed light on “background expectancies” and “common-sense constructs” used to make sense of everyday experiences. These could be exhibited within occasions of “talk about management,” where the details of the talk existed in a more explanatory form. The literature is scarce on just what constitutes these background expectancies. The sense conveyed is that they constitute an important ordering mechanism, referring to what sense the actor typically expects a situation to convey and exhibit, but this is taken no further.

Further it seemed an analytic machinery which allows us consistently to understand the actual background expectancies by which situations are endowed with meaning is equally scarce. At best one can offer only interpretation that is potentially plausible. Sacks (1979) has offered notions of members’ culturally bound categories, and recognition that members have some clear definitional sense in the terms they employ. He recognises members’ orientations to certain definitional terms, and some vocabularies in use. Sacks’ work thus aroused my interest not just in the verbal depictions of management but in how these are constructed, for whether one could gain analytic purchase on the practical reasoning that underlies the category, for how these descriptive practices act as sense making devices, oriented to by the parties.

A particularly interesting field of development has been Jayyusi’s (1984, 1991) sophisticated development of Sacks’ work on categorisations (1972, 1979). Sacks had focused on the implications of descriptions and classifications in everyday use of language. Jayyusi explicates some of the ways in which moral ascription’s (concerning rationality, competence, responsibility and ethical evaluations) are couched in typifications and categorisation devices. This was interesting given that in their accounts to me the managers appeared to offer something like normative ascription’s of their work, with a sensitivity to the appropriateness of their constructions.

It seemed to me that the managers were sensitive to the hearing, the meaning the recipients gave to the constructions they place upon their work. Reading Smith’s (1974) paper “K is mentally ill” led me to consider that there may indeed be a way to make visible the manner by which a particular “version” of managerial life is constructed.

What I had a sense of was that these background understandings and characterisations are part of the managers’ ‘practical reasoning’? That is to point to them as potential tools for

members' to guide and shape up their tellings. So a broadly ethnomethodologically informed approach to members accounts seemed relevant to a study of work and to provide an opportunity to explore the areas of interest that the initial research had produced.

It is perhaps useful at this point to reiterate my position, two lines of analytic interest developed; an interest in the "contemporaneous accomplishment" of activities of management, and "talk about management;" a concern with how the managers shape up an account of their work. Examination of both lines of interest revealed that both had something to add to an understanding of managerial work, and that each viewed in isolation appears lacking.

The reader will thus find that a concern of this study becomes how, indeed if at all, one might deal with both interests by principled, rigorous and coherent analysis. To facilitate this the thesis is divided into two parts reflecting these different interests. This organisation does not reflect the manner by which the findings of each part were apprehended. The work was not conducted as two separate studies.

The logic of the enquiry

Having explored something of the studies thematic and methodological interests it is now possible to return to the question, just what would count as an adequate record of the work? What are appropriate objects of study? I have already suggested that much of the managers work appears to be achieved through talk, but what particular sites should I attend to? It was the managers themselves that pointed to sites of managerial work; meetings, reports, memos and telephone calls. A number of these were selected for analysis and discussion of them forms the ensuing chapters of Part 1.

Part 1, investigates managerial work as naturally occurring social activities. The research is based upon analysis of a number of instances of naturally occurring interaction from the management world addressing the work of management in the fashion of a 'material demonstration'. Transcripts of conversation are presented as the work per se. (Appendix (i) outlines the transcript notation employed.)

The focus of the chapters is on some particular features which struck me as interesting in the data under analysis; features which as interactional accomplishments were part of the collaborative work of management. The concern here, is not with what some object or event means personally in relation to the actor who encounters it, but in what such an object or event consists of, to indicate something of what its complex orderliness consists in and how it is achieved. The research points to some of the naturally organised competencies required of management in their day to day work.

Chapter 2 looks at the interactive work of a pair of memos and the features of the work constructed within. Chapters 3 & 4 look at activities the managers designated as 'planning' and 'organising'. Examining the natural sites of the managers work finds description and explanation to be an integral part of the activity of management, not done for its own sake but as a practical device to achieve a collaborative sense of the work. Thus in Chapter 4 we see that CE & HT work out together just what the category "matrix structure" meant for them, just what was the value of "meetings". How these categories are understood is not found to be something definitive but something that must be worked out between the parties to make mutually intelligible their work, an integral part of recognising and ordering their activities. The visibility or otherwise of these definitions become a topic of interest. To put the issue as a question, the interest becomes just how do managers deal with the appearance of their work, and what insights do they afford for those interested in managerial work?

Part 2 begins a serious interest in this question, an interest in the descriptions, the "tours" that were conducted by the managers for my benefit as researcher. The reader may question my attention to the interviews I had conducted with the managers at the outset of the research for they do not feature as a routine activity in the managers day.

At first sight it had seemed such an interest may be at odds with an approach which wanted to recognise the indexicality and reflexivity of natural language. It seemed to me that such a concern might close off an informative line of enquiry since it struck me that being a manager requires them to be able to talk adequately about their work, part of the managers occupational role was providing people with explanations.²¹ Rather than looking at this as a particular problem of accounts there seemed another way to move on, given the inevitable indexicality and reflexivity of ordinary language what would be interesting would be to explore how the managers cope with and make sensible accounts of their work. What is going on in the talk with me is thus seen as a problem for the managers, and the descriptive practices we see as methods they have for accomplishing mutual understanding.

The interviews were by their informality less interviews and more "talk about their work" for they offered an informal commentary by the managers. I let the managers' talk shape the definition of the situation. The "tours", that I had on tape were clearly serious occasions for the managers. I became an entry in their diaries, an activity to be prepared for and accomplished. The occasion itself became work. Only occasionally were appointments cancelled or managers late. Always I was warmly received, and this reception seemed critical - directions and security issues were organised prior to my visit, coffee and lunch facilities offered.

In addition I am interested in whether it is possible to discover something of the resources and orientations employed in accomplishing an account of management. This is to attend to the managers "espoused logics" and "preferences" as accomplishments which afford an insight into how they accomplish description and explanation of their work.

The interest of Part 2 it seemed might begin to fulfil some of the recommendations of Sharrock and Anderson (1983) that rather than trying to suspend the premise of a cultural community with its associated withdrawal of mutual understanding or shared expectations, it is the task of the researcher to demonstrate how mutual understanding is achieved. It sees the managers as enquirers into their culture, where such enquiry might lay open something of the constructions they place upon what they live through and ²² the way they structure their experience.

Pragmatic issues in the writing

I have within this introduction endeavoured to make apparent something of the logic of the enquiry ²³ and to share with the reader something of its 'productive uncertainty.' I have chosen to continue this biographic approach throughout the thesis in order to reveal more of the process that leads to the production of a piece of research. It is hoped this will provide an insight for those whose interests might have led them to approach the data in a different way.

I am concerned in each chapter to offer a clear and intelligible outline of those problems and concerns that I might face, in addition to reveal how the findings, propositions or discoveries of one chapter have impact upon the other. For it occurs to me that to fail to attend to the steps taken in the discovery and verification of the research is to omit an important part of the discovery. To quote Bittner (1973) the realities of society and culture are

"a function of passion and judgement" and "its violation of the outward stringency's of formalised research techniques not compliance with them that betrays the researcher who feels a sense of responsibility for doing justice to the object of his study." pg 111

Taken as a whole some might consider that the various exhibits of management work that form the chapters of this thesis lead it to exhibit a patchwork quality. Nonetheless there is an underlying coherence of perspective and attack on the phenomenon of management work. The operative aim is not to see the instances of the activity as being typical or representative of the whole category they instance.

Notes

¹ Given the comments of amongst others Buchanan, Broddy & McCalman in Bryman (1988)

² For a consideration of this debate I refer the reader to a paper entitled "Are the classical functions useful in describing managerial work?" Carroll & Gillen (1987) vol. 12 no 1 38-51.

³ "Preconceptions of method in 'Men who Manage' " Dalton in Hammond (1964) "Preoccupation's of Method".

⁴ Whilst interesting and insightful, Jackall (1988), is one such text that comes to mind. His work examines the managerial work interested in their endless striving for success, the habits of mind they develop and the occupational ethics they construct. It does so in a similar manner to Dalton and Kotter, offering insights into selected companies and individuals by an

"interpretative account of how managers think the world works." pg 6

⁵ For an introduction to this debate see Hughes (1991) The philosophy of Social Research.

⁶ Exceptions being Spencer & McAuley, Silverman & Jones, Gowler & Legge. Research does however point to between two-thirds and four-fifths of management time as spent imparting or receiving information, in the main by face to face interaction (Kotter 1982, Stewart 1976) The studies vary in the value they attach to communication, for some management work is almost communication tout court (Gowler and Legge (1983))

⁷ Sharrock & Anderson (1982/3)

⁸ Coulter (1989) refers to a number of activities integral to managing an experiment as being done "unwittingly", it occurs to me that this might be so for aspects of the managers work.

⁹ The notion of indexicality refers to the sense of something depending upon the circumstances of its production. Thus the sense of accounts depends amongst other things upon who said it, when, where, for what reason etc. For a clear account of ethnomethodology's position with respect to indexicality see "The Ethnomethodologists" by Sharrock & Anderson (1986) pg 42-43.

¹⁰ For a useful summary of the various approaches to qualitative research and a brief outline of Ethnomethodology see Halfpenny (1979). For a more detailed outline of the ethnomethodological project the reader may be interested in papers by Atkinson (1988), Gidlow (1972), Sharrock & Anderson (1988) and Leiter (1980).

¹¹ Garfinkel (1967), Sudnow (1972), Turner (1972), Psathas (1979), Lynch (1985), Sharrock and Anderson (1986) and Coulter (1990) amongst others.

¹² Examples include the work of Garfinkel (1989), Zimmerman (1978), Livingston (1983), Sudnow (1978), Lynch (1985), Gilbert & Mulkay (1984)

¹³ In a manner not so removed from the work of Francis (1982,6), Sharrock & Anderson (various) and Jones (1983)

¹⁴ Sharrock & Anderson (1986 pg 88)

¹⁵ Amongst the best known being the work of Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson, Pomerantz, Drew, Button, Heritage and Watson, to whom I refer in subsequent chapters.

¹⁶ These studies share the "analytic mentality" Scheinkein (1978 pg 6) of;

1. Using a corpus of data which is of naturally occurring interaction
2. Viewing the study of conversation as "essential interaction activity"

3. Developing analysis grounded in the details of natural occurrences
 4. focusing on the "sequential emergence of turn by turn talk"
 5. Using a "standardised notation system which captures the detail of conversation production."
 6. Sharing a commitment to a "non intuitive" (based on the data and not recalled or constructed etc.) description of interactional phenomena. Phenomena discovered as the emergent result of repeated exploration of the data.
 7. Presenting findings which describe the "organisation and artfulness of natural conversation" based on the supposition that interaction is organised and orderly.
 8. Attempting to develop conceptual schemas to connect the particularities of contexts studied with abstract culture.
 - 9 To reveal closely ordered sequences of utterances which display orientations by members to the micro details of interaction. Any such matters as intentions, thoughts, feelings are matters which the hearers attend to and interpret in the course of the interaction. Any such matters as intentions, thoughts, feelings are matters which the hearers attend to and interpret in the course of interactions, for practical purposes and thus made publicly available.
- 17 As Sharrock and Anderson (1986), Francis(1982) have before me.
- 18 In particular the work of Lynch (1985), Francis (1985), Clark and Pinch (1985)
- 19 It was this CA had analytic purchase upon, accessible as the accomplishment of ordinary conversational practices within specific settings. These settings in some way gave the occasion of work its uniqueness as a "managerial encounter."
- 20 The managers I spoke with placed great emphasis on the way their work was tied up with the quite specific circumstances and particular problems of doing *that* sort of work in *that* Organisation. Thus the work is offered as unavoidably local, worked up as they go along. This questions the common conceptions of managers as followers of prescriptive, definite codes of behaviour .
- 21 The need to offer 'adequate' accounts of their work was required not just in their talk with me and other outsiders, but in their accomplishment of a range of activities within the Organisation. During a substantive proportion of their work they were engaged in descriptive accountings of states of affairs of their work; assessments of the character of events and reports of the days events were routine features of their talk.
- 22 It could be one might find, as Schutz (1962) says, that they organise the world into categories and types which vary in their precision and abstraction but which offer something of the ethos of those who formulated the accounts. It may be in accounting for their work the managers have recourse to something like "recipes of knowledge"(Schutz) for interpreting their world. Albeit that they may be particular to the individuals employing them and may be found to vary according to the situation of their use.
- 23 I use the word 'endeavoured' as to both say how I built up to this final document; to start on an empty page to put in order 5 years of thoughts; and to summarise findings in an intelligible way for those who have not yet read of the manner of their derivation. This is not an easy task. The reassurance I hope, for the reader is that there are other introductions to be found within the text.

***“Why on what grounds will you look, Socrates,
for a thing whose nature you know nothing about,
pray what sort of thing amongst those that you know not,
will you treat as the object of your search”.***

Plato 1956

Introduction to Part 1

In this part of the thesis I offer a direct and detailed examination of three transcribed instances of management work. The concern is to discover something of the socially organised ways in which these respective managerial activities are accomplished and to locate the methods of practical reasoning essential in getting the work done. This is not to locate competencies in the activities themselves, nor in the manager's mind, role or Organisation.

The magnitude of data from arenas of management activity necessitated an element of selection though they remain sites of management work pointed to by the managers themselves.

Although within each chapter I take a critical stance towards some leading theories of management work what is offered is analysis which endeavours to avoid pre commitment to any theory of management. Attempts are made to suspend judgement as to what is going on. The aim is to see what kinds of phenomena sociological investigation can, by direct and detailed examination, explore. However, it is inevitable that I have some conception as to what is going on, in particular in Chapter 3 & 4 I had a sense that what was going on was something like 'planning' and 'organising'.

No claim can be made at this stage of the investigation that the topics I choose are more or less sociologically important or interesting than any others that could and should be studied. What I claim is that these topics that I address illustrate the form that a more adequate ethnographic approach to management work can take.

In Chapter 2 the interest is in the interactive work of the two memos. I examine some features of the activity of memo exchange, using resources from CA, exploring how they are organised to accomplish some particular interactional task. It points to how particular interactional work is accomplished so as to formulate the business of the memo, to request instructions, to set up a preferred response etc.

Chapter 3 explores an extract from a bimonthly meeting between two senior managers, DB & DW, talking about their future work. The managers work up together through talk, just what their work is composed of. Here it is noticeable that even the managers' concern

as to "what to do next" is observable as a collaborative accomplishment, dependent on practically managed interpretations. The managers make observable and reportable what planning their ongoing relations is about, and in organising the event make it happen. Thus I claim a visibility is accorded to classical notions of planning and organising hitherto unnoticed, that is as socially organised interactional accomplishments.

Chapter 4 looks at an extract from a meeting between a Marketing Director (CE) and a director concerned with Strategic Planning (HT) within a large life assurance company. The meeting is concerned with establishing how they can implement a change in the Organisation's structure to a matrix design. The interest of the chapter is in the interactional work involved in planning & organising a way forward. In the detail of talk we can show the managers working their theories through, just what they understand "matrix management" etc. to consist in. That they disagree on how to implement the change comes down to their different preferences as to how one should manage.

Exploration of these instances of managerial work finds the managers doing "talk about management." Explanation and description are found to be integral to the managers accomplishing their work (though they are not yet afforded any explicit analytical treatment.) The managers conversations are found to be routinely concerned with considerations of what such things as divisional structure, role demands, matrix organisation consist in. The managers trade on their own common-sense knowledge of lines of communication, reporting relationships, terms of reference etc. Past events, held in belief theories and catalogues of experience are found to be ways in which the managers make sensible what it is that they understand themselves to be doing. From such verbal exchanges the managers are found to collaboratively accomplish a mutual understanding adequate to move forward in their work.

*"Words move, music moves
only in time; but that which is living
can only die. Words, after speech,
reach into silence.
Only by the form, the pattern,
can words or music reach"*

T.S. Eliot, Burnt Norton

Chapter 2- A Management memo.

Locating my perspective

In the introduction I raised the point that in the main the studies of management presuppose some first order empirical findings¹, choosing to work with second order constructs and offering decontextualised versions of how management work is enacted.

What is apparent from an examination of the literature is that we are far from understanding how memo sending, agenda setting, making plans, talking about the business, the very activities I was observing the managers to be engaged in and which I took to be aspects of "doing management work" get done.

It seemed that much current enquiry takes for granted the fact that everyday activities are observable and reportable phenomena; they do not see as problematic the "somehow" by which managers engage in the objective production, display and accomplishment of tasks. To gloss over the competencies that the managers rely on in participating in intelligible, socially organised interaction whether that be conversational practices, memo sending or whatever is to miss the details of the work and recognition of it as managerial. It is my intention to take on board the fundamental initiatives of the ethnomethodological Studies of Work, that is an attempt to locate my inquiry within the occasions of work that it describes. By describing the procedures by which managers produce their own behaviour and understand and deal with the behaviour of others, and by a sensitivity to local considerations I suggest one makes a matter of concern how the work is done.

If a theory of the practices and processes of management is to be developed then it should be from indepth investigations of their work. Thus I was advocating a general retreat from what could be premature theory construction in favour of a more strongly empirical approach to the study of managerial activity, and one where the empirical analysis I offered was answerable to the specific details of research materials.

Earlier I raised the concern as to just what management work looked like in the natural setting and what would materials which displayed this consist in? I suggest that talking to the managers revealed a number of scenes or exhibits of work which they considered significant; primarily meetings; but also documents they had generated such as memos and reports. For example one manager on talking about what he did chose to attend to a particular occasion of memo sending, seeing it as a record of work and as able to provide some visibility to the work he was "typically engaged in." The memo was not offered to be read so as to find out about some particular event described within. Rather it seemed the manager was more interested in what work was accomplished in the memo. This was interesting, if I was to find management memos as exhibiting something about management work just how was I analytically to address them in order to make adequate sense of the work going on within?

This first chapter investigates the memo, appendix (ii), as it is socially organised. To some extent just how one might attend to such records of the work without idealising the details found within by description remains problematic.

My decision to start with an analysis of the memo's as oppose to other occasions of work is purely pragmatic, my reason for attending to the memo is somewhat more complex. At the start of the research these documents seemed interesting records of the work that were less ephemeral than verbal reports, by their bodily visibility they were initially appropriated as offering a convenient record of the work. Almost indefinitely available as reference documents, not just for me as researcher but for the managers themselves. Given that management seemed to me to be about such things as assembling factual accounts of the status of projects, financial positions, reporting activities etc this seemed an interesting area of enquiry.

As I explored the memo as a record of the work alongside the literature it seemed that the set of interests that I was developing were somewhat different. The literature had been interested in the memo as a resource, a descriptive text, for finding out about management. On inspection it seemed to me the memo's were more than just records of the work but 'practical accomplishments', the managers work involves both the design, construction and reading of them.²

The managerially competent interpretation of such a document could itself be a phenomenon of interest, for this was an observable feature of the work. It would have been interesting to pursue a line of enquiry as to how these records were appropriated as arguments over what they show or how they are referenced in the doing of other work.³ However given the hunch that work itself was done within the detail of the memos this was not the focus of interest here.

The line of interest I choose to take came from my supposition that the memo was like talk, somehow interactive. I was interested in looking at the memo in order to understand how it is organised to be done, how it is organised to accomplish some particular interactional task. Why not begin here? After all it was in this same textual format that the memo was recognised and in fact retained within the Organisation as a record of the work. It was undoubtedly an instance of managerial work.

The textual format of the memo made it suitable for presentation; the memo was directly reproducible and did not require elaborate transcription symbols. Indeed it occurred to me that this instance of memo sending was not unlike some of the transcripts of management's verbal interactions that I was simultaneously working on. In fact I had a hunch that analytical methods I might employ to look at their verbal practices might be usefully employed here.⁴

Memos resemble ordinary conversation in several ways. They employ direct, personal address and they require participants to respond appropriately to the contribution of others. They involve a turn taking sequence and several contributors can participate. Thus to employ the resources of Conversation Analysis seemed appropriate.

The memos I chose to focus upon (appendix ii) had something of the features of turn taking in conversation about them. Thus memo 1 is constructed for a recipient, JB. The current speaker JH selects JB as recipient and JB is positioned to take up the next turn to speak.⁵

This interest in the interactional features of the memo departs from the majority of ethnomethodologists interested in the analysis of texts, such contributions as Anderson (1978) and McHoul (1982) give. McHoul's work is concerned with studies of reading as a process of practical reasoning and not with the accomplishment of the text itself.

McHoul's work served to raise the idea of how the memo will be received, just as is the case with spoken utterance. It cannot be unequivocally determined by the sender. What is interesting is that in a pair of memos one had access to a public reading, made available in the nature of the response. Further there was something in the memos construction that pointed to a 'recipient design', that is a concern for reciprocity. Such noticings served to fuel my interest in exploring the memo as an occasion of management work.

Given the practicalities of doing empirical research I constrain my interest in the memo as to how managerial work is accomplished and produced from within. It was an area of research where no precedent was apparent. There have been limited investigations concerned with management documents/ corporate writings and a tendency to focus on the functions of written language, as they appear in memo and letters, proposals,

procedural manuals and reports. There was a tendency to offer generalisations and abstractions⁶, or to focus on form⁷ without concern for these as practical accomplishments.

Brown and Herndl (1986) in an ethnographic study of corporate writing suggest aspects of corporate culture affect writers' structure. Thus from reading their study one can learn a great deal about textual features as political/ psychological signs but little about what corporate writing actually looks like and the work of its construction. It seemed these studies tell us little of the work that is the stuff of memos. They see them as tools of the manager, used to manage the work of employees; for defining standards and assigning tasks.

Myers (1982) offers a prescription for how a specific communication strategy matched to an appropriate situation can improve managerial power; but this is only to give an interpretive gloss to the work of management texts, to offer general rules for effective communication. Few studies acknowledge the need to look at the actual business in which the parties to the communication are actively engaged and those that do offer these as descriptive data on work practices, goals and aims.

Having been excited by the potential richness of a paper's title I was often disappointed to find that it offered no more than reconstruction's of the contents of members' accounts, or used their materials to support models, theories and hypotheses. Many, whilst purporting to look at the actual business fell into the trap of doing something different, typically they offered explanation in terms often unfaithful to the phenomena.

Clegg (1987) suggests that the memo can provide a transparent window through which to view the world of management. Though potentially illuminating this was not to reveal the memo itself as anything more than a docile object. McHoul & Clegg (1987) take the existence of the phenomena, in this instance the memo, as given, and as having an objective existence. For them the memo tells stories of the world of management which they assume can provide access to the real worldly character of management work. The memo from this view is itself a management object that enables us to see within its construction the system of activities and orientations we designate as "management work".

I was interested in the memo's as practical accomplishments as Lynch (1985a) says

"examined for how they comprise scenic conditions for the analysability of work within an Organisational setting" pg 7

This led me to enquire into what those interested in an ethnomethodologically informed study of texts had revealed.

Ethnomethodology and written texts

I was struck by the comparative lack of interest, substantive or methodological in exploring what the organisation of textual form display or make discoverable as features of work. Lynch (1985a) demonstrates that the mediation of the document is an essential constituent of scientific 'perception' in a paper exploring the production of events or objects in the documentary form (inscription). Mulkay (1986) suggests that the findings of Pomerantz (1984c) has application to a set of letters in which a group of scientists carry out a technical debate.

Atkinson (1978) looks at how the phenomena of suicide arises as observable in processes mediated by documentary forms. Both Atkinson & Lynch are interested in the text not for how it is accomplished, but for how within the work of the text some other phenomena are created.

It seemed that studies which address the discovery and display of work in textual forms tend in the main to look at their organisation for the specific ways in which the records are used, to view their construction as the practical, occupationally specific competencies of those whose work it is to design and interpret them. (Garfinkel 1967; Weinstein 1975).

Hawes (1976) explicates how a member of an Organisation uses a written document as a resource in talking, how the memo is embodied in day to day work of managers. For Hawes Organisational documents are passive, inert objects until some Organisational member uses them to actually do the clarifying, reprimanding, covering up and forecasting etc. Clearly the managers used documents in such a manner. For example Agendas brought to the meetings sought to bring about a promised organisation, memos were talked over as evidence of past agreements. Influenced by the way I apprehended the memo I chose not to pursue this line of enquiry. I did not obtain the memo from a situation where the managers used it as a resource in talking to each other, but from a manager who used it as a resource to talk to me about his work. The reportable-observable reading of the memo was given for my interest as researcher.

As yet no study seems to attend to the interactive dynamic of written documentation. That is the way in which work is achieved in a person's use of something like verbal commands, requests, orders, agreements and announcements as constituent features of these materials and which are employed in getting the work done. Just as a business meeting is a round of talk which exhibits conversational structures in distinctive organisation so it seems something like this organisation was exhibited by the memos under study.

My interest thus became concerned with exploring the manner of the memo's construction. It was not concerned with the memo as a way to find out about management events. Nor with the veracity, soundness, nor relationship to the procedures taught for correct memo writing. Nor did it assume that the interaction is unaffected by what each manager's, each memo's orientation is. The particularity of the situation is assumed to be a defining feature of the work done. For example the memos I introduce the reader to in this chapter are concerned with the problem of a budget overspend. It is the clarifying, explaining and investigating of particulars of this problem, that is the work; the manager's work of formulating the business at hand. It is the collaborative character of problem identification which makes it interactionally "delicate." Alternatives are set up, carefully explained and carefully explicated. It is not possible for JH to know in advance what JB's reaction to his memo will be. The essence of his work in the memo is to tell the problem in a manner 'appropriate' for receipt by JB.

The analytic approach

So to clarify my position my interest in the memos was not just as resources to provide insights into management work. My interest was for them as practical accomplishments, activities in their own right. The achievement of communication by memo was work that the managers had to do. Things are done in and through the memo and I was interested in exploring the organisation of a particular occasion of memo use.

The concern is for the memo as a here and now accomplishment, teasing out the features that make it just this occasion of memo sending, discovering those features as orientated to by the parties themselves. What this memo is for, how it relates to other work the managers do, and such questions are not dismissed. They are merely set aside.

A reading of the collection of papers on naturally occurring interaction presented by Atkinson and Heritage (1984) was influential in the early stages of the research. Influential in shaping my approach, of particular note was the paper by Pomerantz (1984a) on pursuing a response. It led me to see the memo's as a series of procedures through which the writers pursue possible responses in their assertions and build up the sense of the memo over the course of its accomplishment.

The analytic approach I adopt views memo talk as accomplished by its participants as interactional events and has avoided appealing to criteria which are beyond the scope of an empirical analysis of the data at hand. Such an approach reveals interactionally generated mechanisms and techniques which may be potentially very powerful in shaping the managers' interactional opportunities, in their collaborative, participative work. This begs the question, what is interactional?

Schegloff (1980) makes the point that there is a contrast implied in such characterisations between what is "real life", "human" and "what utterances are really doing" on the one hand, and what is "Lifeless," "mechanical", and the imposition of a disciplined study on the other. The former characterisations are termed "interactional," with the implication that the latter are not, and are of lesser reality or relevance on that account. Thus in the analysis "technical" features of the organisation of interaction are connected to what was being done interactionally. To borrow a point from Sharrock & Anderson (1986), an action observed for example as a request is not examined to discover what it is doing interactionally, that is what it is doing interactionally.

I suggested earlier that on an initial examination there seemed, within the memo, to be features not unlike those CA finds in talk and this observation developed to an interest in using resources of CA and seeing where this led the research.

The interest then is in seeing how the application of findings from CA to the memo might allow me to point towards the possible organisation of the memo, to use them as resources to get at the accomplishment of the work. The finely grained nature of CA gave a means to enter the data, a similar point being raised by Drew (1990) in an article which offers an interesting case for its wider usage within social sciences. Thus within the memo the devices are explicated and used by me to make visible the organisation of the memo. It offers a starting point for eliciting/ teasing out those features/ devices which account for this as management work.

In addition to a broad interest in the 'resources' of CA the chapter is informed by Lynch's (1985) study of laboratory science work. Lynch's work provides a possible way of entry into the data. Lynch offers pioneering work concerned with how the visibility and nature of work in a laboratory is tied to routine features of praxis and conversation. Features he details as accountably significant to the accomplishment of laboratory science work, such features as agreement, objectification, modification are observed in the work of the memos.

Detailed attention is given to how these and other features discovered within the data make for the social order of this memo. The concern is not to prove uniquely managerial aspects of the memo, for the analytical interest is to express what makes this memo what it is. Exploring the memo with resources from CA I might expect to discover quite general characteristics of communicative interaction, but this would be quite independent from expectations I have of discovering particular features. In the process of analysis I try not to forget in my analysis that the memo is a managerial encounter, and will be different from such activities as writing to a friend, or assembling a laboratory report.

The memos were identifiable as ones sent between managers both from what the parties talk about and whom they talk as, here the memo is clearly not operative just as ordinary conversation. As a consequence this may have an impact on the interactional organisation of talk in ways that may be distinct from those in ordinary conversation.

This is not to violate the aims of CA but to attempt to characterise and explicate the very different and various tasks which are accomplished through the devices discoverable within various work routines. A point which Heritage (1984b) supports in particular in relation to turn taking procedures which he says can be shown to have a pervasive influence both on the range and design of the interactional activities of the different parties and on the management of these encounters.

Most of the work on "institutional discourse" from a CA perspective has focused on interactions characterised by specialised turn taking systems etc (as in courts: Atkinson and Drew (1979), Maynard (1984): news interviews; Greatbatch (1986), Heritage & Greatbatch (1991): classrooms, Mehan (1979,1991): Therapeutic communities, Rawlings (1980.) While these contribute much, I share Drew's (1990) concern that these give exclusive focus to highly formalised talk which takes an over restricted view of institutional or work related discourse. Such comment led me to ask how do we know these occasions as "institutional contexts" and more importantly how were the memos recognisably "institutional"? As Schegloff (1987 pg 219) says just because talk occurs in some formal setting (eg a hospital) between parties who can be identified as occupying official roles within that setting (eg doctor, patient) does not mean automatically that talk is "institutional" in character.

However it occurred to me that through the resources of CA an understanding of how members of Organisations engage in ordinary as well as institutional discourse could develop. It occurred to me that the fact that CA finds occasions of ordinary conversation in "institutional discourse" need not be problematic, surely ordinary conversational practices could be vital to the work itself. So in the context of doctor-patient interaction ordinary practices of greeting do work in terms of "settling in", "establishing rapport" etc and may be as important as any "technicalities" exhibited in the talk.

In employing resources from CA I was more concerned by the comments of Sharrock and Anderson (1986), which is that CA is more concerned with utterances than with speakers and hearers;

"it is less concerned with talk as a relationship between persons than it is with conversation as a relationship between utterances." pg 68

For this reason I take an interest in the contribution of an ethnographically informed approach, an interest in who is doing the talking, what circumstances they might be doing it under, what they might be doing it for and so forth.

In looking at how the memos' accomplishment is management work I do not attempt to improve upon the outcomes of the 'practically managed interpretations' which the managers make visible within the memo. The analysis seeks to remain sensitive to the shared understandings and orientations of the participants themselves. Thus their interpretative work can be shown to be grounded in the data.

Following Garfinkel amongst others I take a view that the degree to which one can generalise from my study is not important. My interest is with the devices that are found to lead to the accomplishment of this particular memo under study. What is apparent is that as Sharrock and Anderson (1982) say in their studies of classrooms "Talk and Teaching", desires to generalise offer incomplete accounts;

"the desire to generalise has the inevitable consequence of directing the attention of researchers to the organisation of classrooms only in so far as they resemble one another. It creates an interest in those elements of classroom organisation that are the same from classroom to classroom, regardless of the diversity of things that might otherwise be seen to be going on in them." pg 173

For me the practical organisation of a memo is inextricable from its "subject matter". For the managers, JB and JH, who must resolve the problem of budget overspend the question of what is written about, and how word by word it is set down is the very essence of the work of the memo. The working manager cannot forget that he has budgets to keep to, information to seek, a reporting relationship to stick to and so forth.

The analysis of the memo was akin to that of the analysis of a conversation transcript. I addressed the work of the memo in the fashion of a "material demonstration", presenting the transcripts of the memo not as extracts but as the two complete documents. This was I felt in keeping with a wish to address the memo's observable and reportable detail in

"a way that would not initially idealise those details through the devices of extrinsic description." Lynch (1985) pg 10

My first approach to the data led to an analysis which is line by line, in keeping with the memos organisation which seems sequential.⁸ Thus at the methodological level, that the managers understand a memo by reference to its turn within sequence character provides a central resource for both them and me as analyst, to make sense.

I attempt here to show the reader how I derived the reading I did⁹. The method of analysis is sensitive to the localisation of the devices and features; the way they sit in my description is close to their natural order. However, it struck me on working through the

memo that there were two ways to approach the organisation of the memo. A line by line approach to the data and one which attends to some distinct features of the memo that analysis of the data revealed. The second approach seemed to me to be encompassing something not unlike a "tendentious pattern,"¹⁰ a different order that threaded through the memo leading to the evolution of distinct features, such features as the working up of a request, the construction of a troubles telling. In some cases it seemed that to isolate instances of devices from the ongoing context of the memo might damage the architecture of the memo, their involvement in the more extended, sequential and referential matters being critical to the very organisation I was trying to discover. Analytic abstraction might damage the architecture of the memo.

The problem was how to account for those accomplishments which were not available for immediate inspection or interpretation from the sequential order but which was discoverable over the course of the temporally developed sequence. Just what this recognisability consisted in was not captured by a line by line approach, but tracked through a retrospective-prospective referential environment of organisational practices. A felicitous ability for earlier utterances to take their sense from some several lines later, sequential but separated in their formulation. Indeed the working up of a troubles telling in memo 1 can be tracked over the whole course of the memo.

For this reason I present the findings in two stages, in two presentational formats. This reflects the manner in which I conducted the analysis. First; it is organised on a line by line basis. This reflects the way in which the matters were apprehended in my initial inspection of the memo; the sequentiality. It offers a format close to the local historicity of the memo. It reflects the manner in which its sense is apprehended by the parties. It shows the devices in situ and the patterns of connectedness; the commentary is addressed to a complex of issues pertaining to the achievement of this instance of managerial work.

The second presentational format offered devices that appear to do specific interactional work across the memo's sequential order, that is features which stretch across the line by line order. I offer it as no more than a contending possibility that this was how it was understood by the parties, by elucidation of the interactional problems that each device in the memo appears designed to resolve.

The fact that they are a pair of memos offers me as analyst an analytic resource in that, as the first memo is responded to by a second, we find displayed in that second an analysis of the first by its recipient, a member's potential reading. Detailed attention is given to this organisation, as to how the manager's memo works up the business of the memo as a response and orientates to/reasserts the initial memo.

I do not deny that things which happen in the memo may be influenced by the managers' relationships and social standings, Organisational positions and individual competencies, but I limit my interest in them to determining how they can be seen in the memo. That is to be interested in what can be studied without, to borrow a turn of phrase from Sharrock & Anderson (1982/3), "reliance on any local, special or expert knowledge." It could be that one might learn how it is for the managers, the parties to the memo; what they reveal as concerns, how they understand their relationship, how they handle the overspend etc.

The managers I presume recognise that they are managers, who need to do such managerial things as disseminate sufficient information for decisions to be made, agreement to be reached etc. They are thus "constrained." The constraints I am pointing to are ones which originate in the managerial situation. The fact that they work within a bank with a particular Organisational structure, "bureaucratic" to those within it, is something the managers know and must deal with in the memo. They know the issues of authority and autonomy which will regulate their right to make decisions, make and respond to requests etc. They know their status and position, the Organisational politics that surround their interaction. These features of the Organisation, its rules, chains of command & personalities are important; but I take Sharrock and Anderson's (1988) view that recognition would not seem to require any shift from a general policy of treating social settings as known from "within by the members". They are not necessarily constraints as come from the more Sociological order; the division of labour, a bureaucratic structure, the hierarchy of power and so on.

I was concerned not to import my interpretations into the data. However, I recognise that I inevitably rely on my "commonsense knowledge" of management. I inevitably trade on my members' knowledge in recognising the activities that the participants to interaction are engaged in; for example in identifying this as a memo on budget overspending. However, having made this first level decision "on the basis of my members' knowledge", I, as Turner (1974) suggests, must then pose as problematic how utterances come off as so recognisable. Thus as analyst I explicate the resources I use in making sense of utterances in a stretch of talk, both within the line by line analysis and by offering an ethnographic framework.

Ethnographic orientation to the memo.

The employment of an ethnographic framework was for me an opportunity to illuminate the description by revealing culturally available understandings of the social operation and organisation of activities. It was to reveal something of what I knew of their world from talking with JB. It formed a resource for the production of the memo.

Moerman (1988) suggests that culturally contexted CA could simplify and help provide an adequate translation of events. Atkinson (1988) too argues for a systematic reproachment between Ethnography and CA.

"The ethnographer ignores at his peril the interactional foundations and interpretive procedures he draws on. But the conversation analyst treads on equally thin ice if he becomes seduced by the ideal type of the decontextualised mundane talk of the two party encounter in which rights and resources are equally available."

For Button (1977)

"the ethnographic character turns outwards from conversation to reasoning associated with a phenomena; the fine grained sequential character turns inwards to the details and procedures of operation within a conversational sequence." D09

Button argues that shared aims link the two together and analysis, with concerns for ethnography, displays some objects of attention that the fine grained sequential character of CA could alight upon. It occurred to me that such concerns would mean my analysis was more attuned to the management arena in which it occurs. It is to see researcher knowledge about the practice being observed as complementary to rather than an alternative to discovery. On presenting the transcript to others in the field¹¹ I found people naturally on reading ask who is he? what kind of person is he? Besides, by attending to features of the setting I was actually representing those things that were shown to be salient to one of the managers, JB, and raised by him in his talk with me. For JB these documents were not sufficient in themselves; he clearly felt called upon to elaborate them.

In that I provide an ethnography for the memos I cannot help but characterise them, however, I attempt to restrict description to those features that the interaction shows to be salient; characteristics which are culturally appropriate. To offer what I as analyst knew to be going on in the setting, prior to and simultaneously with the analysis of the memo.

So one can criticise the ethnography I offer in that the nature of and facts of the setting are reliant upon my 'adequate translation'. Those that consider the ethnographic back-cloth brief might ask how we can know what is going on in the memo without knowing a great deal about this particular business situation, the character of those involved in the tasks, the history of their personal relations etc. Clearly there will be issues which my data cannot answer without familiarity with many background matters involved in the situation and the relations between those involved. I must live with this incompleteness.

An ethnographic context

This section offers a 'gloss' of the memos location within the day to day work of a senior manager. It is given to frame the analysis and to familiarise the reader with referential matters which are repeatedly invoked in the memo.

The memos are complete documents generated by a Senior manager (JB) and one of his direct subordinate managers (JH) in the finance department of the head office of a large bank. In some situations of management work a written communication was considered to be inadequate to the accomplishment of the activity at hand. However in this instance JB suggested that the memos alone sufficed for this particular point in the activity. Thus no other form of communication, such as phone call or corridor talk occurred in the time between the exchange of the memos. They act as a paired communication with no intervening discussion.

I was introduced to the details of the memos during a period of observation spent with JB, who was the recipient of the memo. During an informal discussion about his work he selected the memo's as "exhibits" of his work. For him they represented routine, normal practice; a typical instance of his work. Talking about them seemed for JB to reveal several aspects of his work which he considered important; replying to the memo was a typical part of managerial communication; it represented work he must do. Its content revealed typical features of his day to day work; the involvement in budget setting, in managing those budgets and projects. Further it revealed requirements of his role; the need to advise, instruct and educate and the particular style with which he fulfilled his role.

The manager, whom I refer to as JB that introduced the memo's to me was a Senior manager in the head office of one of the "big four banks", an accountant by profession with a lifelong experience of banking and due shortly to retire. He had "guiding responsibility" for a number of projects, being simultaneously pursued. Projects which JB suggested were allocated to him due to his career long experience of banking and the 10 years experience he had in this field of the bank's operations. Concerns with confidentiality limited his exposition of all details of the project. However, he suggested this was of no consequence to an understanding of the memo's.

The memo I refer to as memo 1 (appendix ii) was just one of several dozen JB received daily. Its physical form was constrained by the Electronic mail system, used throughout the bank, upon which it was generated. On being sent to JB the memo was made accessible to him by its reference on the screen of his desk top V.D.U. and by being printed out for him by his secretary along with other paperwork of the day. It was JB who decided the temporal importance of the document. Any number of factors might decide

when he focused upon it, as it was one element in a sequence of events which were associated with his daily work.

The memos relate to a specific project, the implementation of new computers into a department and in particular the cost profile of the project. The project was within the Chief Accountants Department, of which JB was assistant General Manager and Director of Financial Control. JH was two levels below and Head of Costing. The other managers who received copies of the memo were JT, Head of Automation at the same level as JH, and RK a manager within automation.

JH's responsibility was to keep "a check on projects being run". Thus he had to keep checks on the project with the Head of Automation, JT. The two divisions worked together to ensure costs of this project, which was to install a specialised computer system into the Chief Accountant's Department, Group Accounting Division, were "monitored and controlled".

The budget for the project and implementation is thus managed by a number of people in disparate departments and locations. The issue addressed concerns the overshooting of a budget, or "budget overspend" as JB referred to it. The sender of the memo is the user and it is his section which commissioned the project. The project is being handled by both the bank's internal consultancy group and outside consultants.

This project represents £0.25 million in costs to the Chief Accountants Department of the Bank and I was made aware that though JB had little involvement in the setting up of the project he has strongly implied authority from the directors to make decisions in respect of it. He was able to sanction variance. JB said he "merely had to ensure that the Finance Director was informed of them at the end of the year."

Talking with JB at the time he presented me with the memo revealed that in his opinion, however, the memo discussion goes, he as the Senior Manager will ultimately decide what will happen. But JB does not have total control. The budget overspend is seen to be affected by Organisational aspects; JB does not have time to manage it, in addition JB suggests that they have to continue with the project both to avoid wasting time and money and to cope with the work of the bank which demands such technology.

What each manager feels the nature of the problem is characterises both memos. Both managers are aware of the concern to stay in budget and the projects previous history. The character of the encounter, the seriousness of working up a problem, of advising is noticeable on a first reading. There is a politeness about the memos.

One might on an initial reading see the memo as an instance of a senior manager and subordinate managers' concern with costs, the epitome of "rational calculability" as grounds for business activity (Anderson, Hughes & Sharrock 1989). However, detailed examination reveals that it is not merely the costs that concern them; for JB there is more to this occasion of memo sending. Other work is being done.

Where the memo sits in the managers day.

The sending of memo's was a recurrent and routine feature of business work. Indeed for JB and the other managers I spoke with, accounting for the place of memos in their world was something worth raising, most of the managers volunteered a tour of the physical layout of the particular "Memo System" they operated.

The managers were conscious of just what sending a memo entailed in their Organisation. It was a system put there to be used by the managers themselves, colleagues, administrators and others with legitimate rights to communicate by memo. How the memo was to be sent, what form it took differed in each Organisation. In this particular Organisation the system was formularised. It was as JB said "a system set up for everyone within the bank to use". It was referred to as the "electronic mail system" and for JB that meant that the communication was both "immediate and direct to the recipient". For him it was an improvement on the traditional internal mail systems through which memos were usually sent. These were slower and meant that all documents went through the Personal Assistant's desk. That they were sent directly to the manager seemed significant to JB, perhaps something to do with the need for confidentiality and speed of action that resulted from dealings with large sums of public money.

For the managers to send a memo, they only had to follow a certain procedure; putting it on the computer, addressing it to the recipient and sending. To gain access to the memos they had been sent they needed only a password to open their personal mail files. Checking the electronic mail I observed to be an ongoing feature of JB's day in the office. The main checks for JB were done first thing in the morning, after lunch and last thing at night. During the day as the VDU screen is on his desk he may be interrupted at any time by a memo which he can attend to as he chooses. Within the bank's system it is not necessary to involve any third party nor to understand the intricacies of the electronic mail system.

In the context of Organisational communication, the memo sending exhibited the following features which the literature on memo use within Organisations would lead us to expect:-

1. Routinisation of a communication system and its incorporation at all levels in the hierarchy
2. The ethos of the memo; that is concise, brief (typically one or two pages), time saving, taken to be an enduring feature at all levels in the Organisation and for most purposes of internal communication.
3. Its documentary role, as providing a means to reference, at some future date, the details of past communications.

The managers make observable the memos position in the wider social context of their world by a set of practices concerned with identification. This elicited within the course of the first few lines of the memo a whole series of identification details, such as; the Organisations address, the name of the department, the date it was sent, the time, the full names of individuals receiving and sending. This formality (I use this term for its noticeable difference from other textual forms) clearly serves a purpose for the business undertaken between the two managers making recognisable something of the business between the parties.

Unlike natural conversation the memos were constrained by some Organisational requirements. For these particular memos the locatory details are standardised in order that an Electronic Mail communication system can run. Instituted perhaps for uniformity all communication in the Organisation by electronic mail took this form. It formalised the creation and circulation of the information by memo, ensuring receipt only by legitimate parties and speeding up its transfer. Given the vast network of people and processes with which the managers interact one can imagine concise identification to be valuable as reducing the time it takes the manager to locate himself to the business at hand.

As I examined the memo I had a growing appreciation of the extraordinarily detailed way in which managers produce and orientate to action. This appreciation led, as it did for Atkinson & Heritage (1984) with respect to conversationalists, to an increasing awareness of the fundamental organisational importance of details that might seem on initial examination to be random, unpatterned and unimportant.

During my research I became aware that for the managers accounting for what they did was not just the work of talking to me about their work. The managers were required to talk about what they did on numerous other occasions. Here it is found to be a part of this textual work, a behavioural feature of management itself. Although this remains a noticing in this chapter; it placed a seed of thought that led me in further chapters to take up the interest in how managers account for and talk about their work.

A sequential analysis

This section of the chapter offers a sequential analysis of the memo, which focuses on the work as it can be seen to be accomplished in the "memo conversation."

I argue that such an approach to the data is necessary if one is to remain open to the natural order of happenings that are going on in the data. To me it was essential to get a feeling for what the memo as a whole consisted in, to know how any particularly interesting features of the memo I focus on sat in relation to the other happenings. I knew too little of what the natural organisation of this memo consisted in to begin any other way. I choose to focus on the memos internal logic and their unfolding character, with descriptions of what the business of each memo is for the parties, the insitu reasoning.

Stage 1 line by line analysis.

Memo 1

Lines 1-12 announce an identity, mark the memo as sent within a Organisation. For those who use the memo its validity /acceptability is the very stuff of its usage. Thus it is made explicit and noticeable that the memo was sent within a bank, that it was on a given date and time, and to whom and from whom it was sent. This is identical for both memos. It says something about the routine, standardisation of this type of communication, the orientation to specific, targeted individuals. These perhaps are anchoring devices very similar to Schegloffs (1980) "place terms" which are used to formulate a location. They mark the memo's entry into the world of management.

JH mentions the business of the memo, lines 12-15 : the problem of the budget overspend. It is raised in a very programmatic manner, as a statement of "the position." At this stage JH gives no hint of the fact that these extra costs are "troubles". In line 15 his comments "because we had no choice" serves to suggest a *fait accompli*. It sets the position up as a natural inevitability. In the absence of a justification or explanation for why they have no choice it has the character of being self-evident and establishes as inappropriate any further interest in these "minor increases". It acts to disclaim the fact that minor increases were approved, when the notion of a "fixed fee" implies that such increases are not accepted.

Line 15 acts as something like a boundary marker, it seems to close the episode/ topic. For the purpose of this communication it stops any consideration of causality by making explicit the inevitability of the problem. This is to set up a position where a consideration of cause would thus be out of place. It could be that it uses the opportunity provided by the fact that the memo is authored in an uninterrupted manner, to construct a fitting account. It is to recognise perhaps that the nature of communication by the memo is that

one can systematically work up the telling, without challenge and without reference to what an alternative version might look like.

The "because" in line 15 acts to disclaim the minor increases. It is a disclaimer by virtue of the status assigned to the increased charges, the reader is moved to see concerns with them as tangential to the main business of the memo, for they are judged as "minor" which suggests inconsequentiality. JH could have said "we had no choice"; but use of "because" here suggests they may have wanted to act otherwise.

The use of "we" is worth comment for its appearance is ambiguous. It seems JH is speaking of a group of which he is a part, but does he speak as though the recipient, JB, is a member of the group? The justificatory statement that follows seems to exclude JB, yet in line 16 "we've" presses the ambiguity, reifies the notion of the group. This may work to allow inclusion/ recognition of the organisation of the multi-reader nature of the memo, therefore drawing in all readers, yet it is empty of implications for specific individuals. It could be a resource or context for introducing the presence of parties recognisable to JB.

Thus responsibility for where the recipient is positioned with respect to the "shortcomings" is assigned across to JB. He can decide whether he is included within the "we" or a party outside of it. [As a point of interest, in memo 2 JB, uses 'we' locating himself within the cohort.] "We" also makes the discovery of shortcomings a public state of affairs. It is an orientation to the readers of the memo. It provides for a coherence of occasions in which persons not directly addressed are involved and may provide grounds for a right to reply from those on the circulation list. It does not identify specific members of the cohort publicly and demonstrably involved at this stage, though line 19 "JRT and I" shows how the opening of the memo provides for both single and collective involvement. This is nice for it allows for occasion - relevant categories of parties to be drawn out in the subsequent memo.

Line 19 is the first penetration of the anonymous cohort implied by the "we." This anonymity of address carries the work forward. It is a term that can include any combination of members of the category, thus it can refer to writers, recipients of the memo or to the bank as a whole. That "we" locates the need for a formal decision in a wider agency means accordingly that the request is heard not merely as JH's concern. It gives it wider authority.

JH progresses through the issues he wants to raise, this is facilitated by offering them as statements, which allows for the finishing of one issue and the initiating of another. In line 16 the "I think" is a very tentative lead to introduce the suggestion that "some formal decision needs to be taken" This suggests an awareness on JH's part of a structure

relevant to problem solution. That this seems to recognise the need for formality would appear to change the situation with respect to cost increases for the managers, and in some way the visibility and accountability of the project in the Organisation changes.

The "I think" is a delicate statement. It engages the cohort of memo receivers in a way that can be spoken of as a position of trust. The "I think" is hearable as a qualification of the above account. It is perhaps marking a change in the work being done in the memo. A move from a statement of position to a suggestion of action. It asserts the claim whilst seeming to display agency, uncertainty even a potentiality to be disagreed with. It provides for the possibility of contrary assertions, yet it also has some assumed authority. JH appears to orientate to a right within this memo to make some recommendations for a next move.

Lines 12-15 are a version of events which for the writer represents what has happened. In the memo we are told at the outset that there are shortcomings in the work, lines 12-14. This authorises the version that follows which admits the detail of the shortcomings in the project's budget. The nature of the memo is that it assigns to JH the definitional privilege; and internal to the memo it authorises not only JH's actions but also the action of those parties associated with him; Les and John.

In memo 1 to recount a trouble would sanction a way of working which has been mistaken and would thus make JH, as representative somehow involved in it. JH works up a different telling, a telling which details the "specifics" of the projects position without concern for evaluating the reasons for the position. Line 14 the wish "to add to the fixed fee" (a deviant categorisation, since the agreement with MSD is defined at the outset as "fixed") could be heard as JH's mistake. But JH sets the memo up so that the group MSD by asking for more, decides how the normative accent should be assigned. The MSD are assigned the ownership of the trouble for they are causing the overspend.

JH's authorisation for knowing, which he takes for granted might come from his participants rights and obligations. The knowledge he has as a result of his position in the bank. JH's disregard to issues of what authorises the decision to allow "minor increases" when the fee is "fixed" seems somehow acceptable as one might expect a relatively senior manager to be able to approve small changes. There is some conception by JH of where the boundary to his right to allow cost increases exists, a recognition that decisions with formal approval are required in a situation where one as a department manager is overspending the budget.

In lines 14-16 JH establishes the project's position as historic and by this gives it a definiteness. By setting up an outline of the situation JH brings clarity and a sense of exactness to the memos detail. In offering a position statement JH holds the project static

in discrete moments of time. This is important work for it brings a distinctiveness and order to what is an ever changing environment of events. Thus the memo enables individuals to step back from the ebb and flow of the projects course and to temporarily reach some tentative conclusions. It provides for the existence and procedural consequentiality of the need for decisions.

Much of the literature concerned with decision making in management suggests that it requires some narrowing down, some simplification of the complexity of the everyday world of management in order that realistic decisions can be obtained. One could suggest that in the memo financial figures are turned into a coherent, formatted and systematic, easily described representation of how things are going.

The memo itself shows how the line by line revelations of detail show progressively what is up and coming or has passed before. Thus the prospective-retrospective organisation is inherent and allows great variability in assigning "what I saw." The retrospective-prospectiveness is exaggerated by a lack of detail in the first paragraph. One almost needs to read all the memo to make sense, perhaps this circularity gives a feeling of completeness to the memo. Does this work as a puzzle, doing work by ensuring recipients read on, by offering a puzzle of reference? Lines 20-21 encompass the range of information, orientate to, and achieve a transition from the present position to a reflective historic review.

Recognition that the memo has an outside audience appears by the device of recipient design. By this I mean to refer to Sacks' notion. Sacks has been concerned to show that sequential production of 'turns at talk' is sensitive to the interactional relevance's of its recipients. He explains it as the variety of ways that co-conversationalists talk is fashioned in order to take into account and to address the category incumbencies and particular attributes of the recipient. That is JH attends to the relevant knowledge of JB, where not only is knowledge attributed to him but it is assumed that it will be employed by him.

Sacks sees recipient design as operating with regard to word or topic selection, the admissibility and ordering of sequences, the options and obligations for starting and terminating conversations etc. The memo, by its use of concepts, recognisably part of the business world, seems designed for reciprocity by those in a business world; such terms as cost, fixed fee, formal decision, budget, project authorisation, agreement, consultant, payments, fee, over-run, team amongst others.

It is interesting to consider that parts of the memo may have to be recipient designed for a number of different parties other than those actively involved. Thus memo 1, must be designed in such a way that JB reads the memo as a request, and understands it in such a

way as to be able to design a sequentially relevant answer. But it must also be readable in these ways by others who are not required to reply.

Examining recipient design shows the degree to which the memo language is a contextualised and contextualising phenomena. Perhaps by individualising the memo it places responsibility on the recipient to offer a relevant usable reply, and may establish some commonality between the two managers, some form of relational link.

Lines 12-15 have for me as analyst a number of indexicals and these accomplish a sense of recipient design. For it would seem JB is a party to whom the M.S.D team, Les and JRT are, what the shortcomings are, the extra work, the fixed fee etc. Lines 20, 23, 25, 43 show sensitivity to the recipient, to JB's anticipated reply. They do this, I suggest, by asides presenting insertions which dilute the strength of an earlier/initial statement. They make recognisable a cautiousness in this part of the telling, a rephrasing of the history of past events. This prudence may be associated with a junior/subordinate manager of staff; or, given that it was a communication within a bank, it may reflect a prudence in disclosing figures as final, prior to their realisation. Something which common belief associates with the operating culture of banks.

If, as it appears JH has formulated the telling so as to emphasise the uncertain amount of the figures, what work can they do within the memo? They may act to excuse the status of the communication that follows or even establish a right to comment by weakening the strength of the proposal/assertion. In that they appear almost as asides they may serve as devices to allow co-occurrence of a number of opinions, something which may avoid disagreement and establish with the recipient a right to reformulate the communication. Line 25, "I think", suggests an uninformedness, that trades on the fact of not being party to an agreement which means one need not be expected to know all the detail. It does not seem to concern JH, he is not worried to justify why he isn't party to the information. What is significant is highlighting the reliability of his figures. It can be heard as allowing for qualification of the memo's detail. Authorising a challenge by the recipient, it marks the account as admitting that there may be potential disagreement from recipients. Such sensitivity works interactively to allow the authors to work up their preferred telling. An uninvited, contrary assertion by JB, may open the potentiality for disagreement. If JH recognises that he might not be entirely correct then his account cannot as easily be immediately disaffiliated with, and renounced.

In the position of a subordinate who requires a decision to be made by his seniors the achievement of the memo being read as tentative, acts perhaps to recognise the possibility of open disagreement with his formulations from JB, whilst still working to allow him to put forward a claim. The rhetoric of hesitancy and unassertiveness frees the text from strong evaluative assessment on the part of the recipient. JH allows that re description by

JB is a possibility, without necessarily departing from the assertion of the memo. It is one of the ways JH makes agreement a possible option for the reply and indicates how in one such instance potential alignment is formed. Agreement as to what "the facts" of the project are, is consequential to the determination of support/ authorisation. The possibility that the problems with the project were vulnerable to reinterpretation was an issue to be practically settled in memo 1.

In conversation when speakers seek agreement they can change their descriptions or accounts of objects in the face of sequentially placed disagreement by others. Where the turn of one party is extended, as in the memo, this is not so easy. In conversation the immutable facts can be modified by the next speaker turn. In the memo this next turn is not so immediate. Thus a modification may not be possible at the appropriate time. If self modifications or a series of re-assertions¹² are employed in the memo in a pre-emptive manner then they may work to ensure that the recipient in his reply avoids taking an undesired interest in the business. It works to shape the up and coming reply. The prefacing in the memo may then be very important. It allows for modifications by JB or the other recipients because the assertion is not being constructed as noting an immutable fact.

At this point it is useful to consider the responses of memo 2 to see if it provides any support for the above analysis. Memo 2 replies are sensitive to this feature of memo 1 in what they "make of" the object of reference i.e. how JB re describes the project. A number of re-assertions are discoverable in memo 2 which qualifies JH's initial references such as; "the £2000 is almost predictable" this characterises JH's concern as misplaced. Thus reformulation opportunities are taken up by JB and modify the position status of JH's concerns.

Returning to memo 1, lines 18-19 provide some indication of a recognition of lines of responsibility and involvement in the project. It is an issue of entitlement, and establishes JH's right to be dealing with the problem. Of interest is the fact that in the absence of an individual (Les) the area we might assume to be his area of responsibility persists and in this instance becomes an area of responsibility for JH. That "the matter is made worse by the current position of the budget" by its phrasing suggests that whatever is the specific nature of cost troubles, they are dependent on the way the wider budget looks for their status as troubles.

In lines 20-21 the memo is marked in a manner conveying an explicit sense of beginning, as a sequence shaped by a start. It is implicitly recognising the here and now nature of the account. Line 20 "As I understand it" formulates the account of events as his personal interpretation, "and subject to anything JDG has to add" qualifies it by making explicit a relational stance to another party. Line 20 thus preannounces, bids for story space, ie it

operates to gain access to an extended turn at talk. It reveals that something up and coming may explain lines 12-19 which are now revealed to have, by virtue of their indexicality the potential to be problematic even for the recipients.

In line 23 JH recalls an earlier encounter where authorisation for a certain level of spending had been given. The reference to "(MSD form BBC 20)" implicates the role of documentation in the assessment and evidencing of formal authority. The form is in some way to be recognised by the parties as standing on behalf of the budget.

Lines 22, 28, 34 JH formulates his account in a temporal sequence, giving it its legitimate history. This works to establish its credibility as an account. That JH numbers and underlines the temporal phases emphasises their placement/ reference to the projects life. The temporal order gives the memo a sense of being part of an ongoing "event," part of a larger time frame.

There are a number of devices which are relied upon for establishing a particular order in the memo, such as the use of paragraphs, point systems, numerical references. They do not reflect an observable seriality in the work of the project itself, but are here employed to produce the visibility of an ongoing course of work within the textual format of the memo. A "definite" project is constituted with a beginning, a reportable course, and a completion. The memo provides for itself as a retrospective report of a course of work. I knew from observation that in the actual occurrence of the events reported the activities would be greatly diversified in duration, constituent activities, character and interrelationships. But these features of the work are not significant to the detail of this memo which identifies a standard and ordered sequence of phases for the project.

Over the course of lines 20-39 JH sets up the position of the project. He defines the position in personal rather than business terms. He succeeds in setting up the details of the "trouble" factually from what he knows. The figures depict the cost structure of the project, they build a summary picture of the financial state of the project. The transformative work of lines 22-36 build up to line 38's announcement of an overrun; "to put us £64000 over budget this year....so the total overrun looks like £66000 so far". JH provides the connection between the cost structure of the product and the need for managerial decision making. This visible and understandable consistency in how the overrun is set up does some work in making visible JH's reasoning and hence why he must raise the troubles, because there are inevitable difficulties with the way things are.

It would seem that the purpose of JH's work in this memo is to provide a comparative base for JB's review of the relative state of the project at this time, to tell him what has happened & how things stand. He also marks distinctions between what should have been and what is. JH's figures provide a consistent set of cost representations so that any

connections between stages will be meaningful to JB. To do this JH draws upon three distinct sets of resources:

- a) knowledge of the authorisation arrangements
- b) knowledge of the contractual obligations with regard to the project
- c) knowledge of how a) and b) have been deployed

In line 39 JH proposes further increases in costs. It is prefaced with the phrase "It now seems likely" which marks its occurrence as a contending possibility. In line 40-41 the change from "we" to "in their experience" disassociates JH from the activities which lead to the trouble, it is a boundary device which disassociates JH and his cohort from the consultants.

Line 42 "it could be more" marks uncertainty from JH as to the exactness of his figures for the overspend, in effect it modifies, reasserts his claim, line 39, initially expressed in the "now it seems" format. Though the "it seems likely" adverbial format marks a degree of uncertainty for the claim of the extra demands, it is not as strong as lines 42/43. It allows discovery in line 44 of what the £6000 represents; "minor amendments". It characterises lines 45-50, the position of the project as a minimal position, by projecting an implication that costs will grow.

During the lines 51-59 JH ventures some assessment and proposals for action to manage the project, but in a manner which allows JB the option for modifying or rejecting the proposals. The proposal is generated out of an absence of any other justifiable "choice". The lines 51-59 are hearable as a series of queries rekeying the ongoing verbal interaction in such a way so as to seem to indicate a shift from the disseminating tone of the account of the project to a gloss of what needs doing. Through the chained series of queries, JH effects a requirement on JB to offer specific directions. The queries are hearable as addressing or leading to JH making a request. The use of queries, displays a sensitivity to the status of his assumptions and work to allow recognition of the possibility of alternate courses of action other than those he sees as viable. The lines 51-56 work up the request, (explored in detail later). They work to make JH's suggestion in lines 57-59 seem reasoned, the result of an evaluation of alternatives. It shows that he has already examined the possibilities and can assess them; thus lines 57-59 are supported. Their status as queries serves to weaken the tone of what by line 57 is a request; hearable as tentative they point to a difference in status between the two managers. They seem by their inquiring tone to be prerequisite to the asking of questions and as such work to establish the right to ask a direct question as a natural next progression. They allow for the inclusion of proposals by JH, thus narrowing down/bounding the potential scope of responses open to JB in his reply.

JH's subordinate position makes it important that any proposals he makes are tentative; the use of query avoids any concerns that suggestions he makes may be read as

statements of courses of action which he intends to take. Thus they establish a respectful tone.

Lines 57-59 formulate the task/problem in terms of two questions which seem by the use of the word "or" to be mutually exclusive (a fact which JB's reply does not acknowledge). This 'either/or' formatting makes explicit JH's expectations of a response. We see here his understanding, albeit perhaps a preferred one, of some structure to the way a senior manager will respond. For him this response is either by the requesting of a meeting or by the giving of authority. It may also be seen as a formulation set up in an attempt to contain JB's reply; to elicit a preferred hearing.

The memo finishes with a possible course for the project's future development laid out. In so doing it works to set up/ elicit a response and seeks to provide an appropriate rejoinder from JB. Listing problems in the memo, may not be just a way of ensuring they get recognised and thus can be talked of but a way to set up a reply. It may be something about the build up, the nature of imparting information into an account, the construction of its internal order that establishes just what an 'appropriate' reply should contain. For the response must align with the first memo.

If matters outstanding are treated this brings the activity to a natural closure. The need for a formal decision mentioned in line 17 is specified finally in line 59. As the memo proceeds it works up a picture of the problem, finally formulating it in the last line.

There appears a sensitivity in the memos for their arrangement/ relationship to the particular occasion of use. This concerns how the two memos are "put together" into the pattern they make. The relational stance between the two memos is in fact a manager's problem, it is managerial work.

Memo's 1 & 2 seem to offer an instance of what Francis (1985) refers to as "topic weaving", where topics in conversation are continued through making reference to previous topics or to putative future ones. JB weaves the topics of memo 1 into his memo 2. A sense of relatedness is sustained between what is being talked of now by JB and what JH has talked of. The manner in which JB within memo 2 orientates to memo 1 will be critical to what goes on in the future history of the project.

The spelling out of "options" in memo 1 makes a contribution to the organisation of memo 2. Even the scene setting of the early lines could be seen to preempt certain objections/ concerns in the reply. It reveals an attempt by JH to manage the reply that JB will offer. This attempt to influence the reply, when the nature of the interaction is that the two managers are spatially and temporally distinct, is a lovely indication of how the interactional relationship is managed.

If we move to memo 2 we find that in order for it to be recognisable as a reply in this occasion it has to be done within the framework of an answer turn. Indeed memo 2 is set up so as to be conditionally relevant to memo 1.

JB does not however adopt the projected organisation suggested by memo 1 in his construction of memo 2. Whilst he aligns to memo 1 and its topics he constructs a reply that indicates that there need not be adherence to the projected schedule memo 1 suggests. Thus whilst the memos are orientated to each other, their relationship is one of co-orientation not collaboration. JB in memo 2 does not address his points to the natural order of memo 1.

For JB re characterisation of the topic is necessary. What is interesting is that in memo 2 we find JB's assessment of the troubles broaden, to the topic of how projects should be managed.

Memo 2

In memo 2, line 13, JB affiliates to JH's account by "Thanks". This greeting substitute requires JB to continue, but sets a neutral tone by its common usage as an acknowledging device. It is a display of reciprocity. JB follows this by the preface "I think" which serves to weaken the "several points" that he subsequently offers in a very assertive manner. It reduces what could become an occasion of direction giving, by qualifying his account as more of a construction of a plausible explanation, a preferred interpretation rather than a set of directions. It leaves open an opportunity for JH to remain uncommitted to a strong affiliation with the account. (However, given that JB is the senior manager with ultimate authority there is an underlying sense that how JB says things should be done will be how they in fact turn out.)

The preface "I" used here does several things. It attracts attention and is an identifier. By its work in personalising JB's up & coming communication it provides a less formal opening. Had it been in the third person it would have distanced the relationship between the two managers. However it suggests a confident and authoritative tone expected because of JB's position as senior manager.

The opening of the memo seems delicately designed with respect to the occasioned characteristics of the particular memo and sender. An important resource in this design is shared knowledge between the parties. Memo 1 is essential to sense making of memo 2 and provides for economy. "I think there are several points" is an explicit way to make acceptable the selection of specific matters for attention from memo 1. That this assessment is tied to the first memo makes JB's transitions to general issues of good practice

possible and indicates to JH where they both stand with respect to the business in hand. This is that JB will approve of the increase in costs, but that it is not a situation which routine good management practice would have allowed to arise. Thus the business of the reply seems to be to point up what normal good management practice consists in with relation to project management.

The points that are introduced by JB are all re invoked from memo 1. It seems from the strong indexicality of memo 2 that there is an assumption that memo 1 is available to be referred to. This could be expected given what we know of the status of the memo in the management world for they stand as objects of reference and are thus retrievable. This is different from conversation where the communication is lost. The memo's status as a referential document could enable economical reply, exploiting context dependencies.

Opening the memo with a non committal acknowledgement works to formulate the up and coming response, in such a manner as to allow space for comments. The insertion of judgements is made possible by the absence of a direct answer. The "several points" signals that some form of remedial re characterisation/ reconstruction is to follow. This seems to be achieved by a series of comments that have almost "idiomatic" status in everyday language. The opening, line 13 provides information as to how what is to follow is to be heard, how JB wishes certain messages to be viewed.

This is to show that there is an incompleteness in memo 1 or that additional factors of significance will be added. That line 13 aligns to memo 1 without the need to enact communicator roles and organisational norms reveals that his authority to comment upon, interpret and direct is taken for granted and an ascribed and implicit right. As the recipient of a request this is to be expected.

By giving status to his thoughts, JB transforms them into public property. Lines 14-17 point to an inadequacy in the management of the budget. It notices a "mistake" in a manner which implicates error, but by the use of "we " and "but that is water under the bridge", it is in a less definite way. Though JB recognises an error, he does not make it the main business of the memo, offering comment in the manner of 'asides'. Line 17 seems to suggest responsibility /blame is not an issue to make explicit; the reproach seems somehow to be implicit. Perhaps this may be due to the seniority of the managers, where a rebuke in the public arena of the memo is not deemed appropriate.

Given that the rebuke is not made explicit, the work the aside does is to bring to the attention one of the possible senses which may be read from the situation and then dismiss that reading explicitly. Thus it is almost a rebuke in the negative or inverse. Given its delicate nature it does not break the ongoing tone of neutrality readable within the memo. There is a wonderful balance in the line for it is almost as if the reproach is

made, then retracted. Thus the mistake is raised and then forgiven but it is not forgotten; for the method of employing asides does interesting work in this memo. It seems to keep the reproach alive. They serve as a means to repeat the rebuke of not having set up a contingency, when the particular concern would seem to have been extinguished by line 17.

Lines 18-21 once again topicalise a mistake without the explicit allocation of blame. It is for the parties to the memo to know if JB is identifying a fundamental mistake on JH's part. The use of "we" serves to disperse the blame to a cohort, which we can only assume to include those responsible for the project. The mistakes are located as procedural with the failure to account for cost figures "as one always does." JB's lines 16, 19 express resignation to the troubles, characterising the project's cost as "unfortunate". That this is not expanded implicates error in a less definite fashion. JB phrases the mistake as a "wrong assumption" and there is thus a softening of any criticism the utterance may be heard as offering.

The "however", introduces the necessary next actions, but is phrased in such a way as to leave indefinite the consequence of the wrong assumption. The matter in question for JB is the acceptability of the increase in costs for the project. In line 20 JB assesses the current position as one of no choice, "no practical alternative." By doing so he offers it as an accomplished fact but he suggests an inevitability, a *fait accompli* which is somehow different from JH's suggested inevitability. That the option of an alternative is mentioned by JB, "a contingency", seems to raise the point that an alternative to this position would be preferable. For this reason line 18-19 seems to express some displeasure on JB's part over their position. By usage of the term "contingency" JB appears to consult an institutionalised feature of the work. That this was institutionalised is recoverable in the text by line 15 which makes it seem a common place activity.

In lines 22 to 24 JB's focus is on JH's communication of a "further £2000 cost". JB's reply is reproachful by virtue of the inclusion of "almost....if we had one," as are lines 25-28. That the trouble is due to the lack of a contingency is thus re-emphasised. In lines 22-24, "the £2000and is no real problem" is formulated in a manner which makes the severity of the cost an issue. By "almost predictable, and is no real problem" JB sets up a reply which seems almost patronising in its dismissal of the costs, almost seeming to reproach JH by saying that he should have expected it. One might even hear him as saying that this is basic management, that someone in JH's position should know what costs will do, that they are "likely to grow some what" and how to guard against this. Line 26 implies that the finding was obvious within a routine understanding of how projects run.

The directives in lines 29-37 may be read as specific and unquestionable due to the prior "please" which may be heard as instructional. In doing so JB displays a reading of JH's communication as an injunction to produce demands for actions. Thus it relates itself to memo 1 by seeming to be a response to the information offered by memo 1 but does not accept all that memo 1 offers. The reply is not orientated to memo 1 in any explicit manner, but by the incorporation of details raised within memo 1. JB's demands for action seem rather more instructional than requesting in tone. This is achieved by prefacing the directive with imperatives, verbs such as "confirm", "express", "refer" and the fact that no mention is made of the right to challenge or qualify the directive or the source of authority for the instruction. The directive is strongly stated. Accordingly the memo is now not to be heard as noting possibilities but as instructions, such that JH does not appear able to disagree. There is no opportunity for it being a contending possibility; it is an uncontested plan of action. JB also invokes authority in support of his instructions by invoking access to experience.

In line 33 JB proposes that the parties "talk" despite JH's requests for authorisation. The memo is instructional despite the use of collectives such as "we" and "our". Memo 2 does not reveal a concern for agreement from JH and as such it seems to allow for a hearing of unequal status between the parties. As publicly available instructions JB's directions to JH have a definite, tangible and binding character regardless of any underlying attitude or personal commitments which might be involved.

The sense one has on reading the second memo is that it is being used as an opportunity for inculcating the standards that comprise definite ways of handling projects, managerial procedures; a body of knowledge or practices transmitted from a presumably competent person to one who has yet to attain such competence. The actual authorising of the "overrun" one senses is an inconsequential, remedial issue for JB.

What is noticeably absent is any explicit granting token,¹³ in particular there is no explicit "yes" following the request. Lines 13-27 act to delay the "granting". They seem to monitor the project, performing a check/ review of the interpretation of the information. By omitting to provide the expected response JB may achieve interactional space to exhibit more about the request, in particular the lapsing of the expected organisation for project management.

In line 35-6 "we should try to establish," the use of "we" presents the appearance of JH and JB being collaboratively linked. It projects JB's involvement with the project into the future. Given that he was not involved in day to day project management one could go so far as to suggest it was a device to soften his directions; by the fact that he implicates himself in the workload it is hearable as less of an instruction. It is supportive, projecting his continued involvement. The aside, that "we may face" provides a hearing of the

project as ongoing and uncertain. This is supported by line 36, which formulates how what has been established as costs in the project is dependent on the temporal situation and may be modified in the light of further developments.

Exploration of the memo points to the design of the project's future course as an in course accomplishment of the interacting memos. Thus the memo can be seen as doing preparation or groundwork for the achievement of future work and as work being done to ensure that there will be correct dealings with costs and CMSD in the future. It seems a way for a senior manager to keep the business of his managers to an anticipated course, by setting up a preferred arrangement to their work, a way of ensuring that things will from now on get done in a predictable way. He is providing a set of instructions, a way of constraining future possibilities for the development of the budget.

What is interesting about the work done within memo 2 is its failure to attribute blame or to attend explicitly to the causes of the cost increases. Its concern centres on making visible the need to adhere to official procedures and standard practice in project running. It clearly shows some members' theory of how to handle project costs, one that one could imagine is organisationally in place.

It is not the costs that are at issue between the parties so much as the accounting procedures within which they are shown. For JB correct project management is about setting up "Contingencies". The "trouble" JH reports is brought about because the normal routine way of managing has not on this occasion been followed. This is JB's preferred hearing. A practical matter for JB becomes not just authorisation of the increased costs, but telling how it should have been done. The insitu reasoning of the memo allows this educative role to be orchestrated.

The memo provides a view of management which makes the concern a matter of "covering oneself" by employing correct practices for accounting for the costs of a project. Thus project management is not just a question of cost. It seems the £72000 increases in costs would have been acceptable if they had been recognised prior to their "realisation". It seems if they appear unexpectedly they are not acceptable. Thus it was not a question of the "real" cost of another £72000 but whether the situation had been documented. There is something about the image of an unaccounted for overspend that is unacceptable to management. If it is in the figures of the budget it is not a problem. It suggests something about control, about coping with uncertainty. There is a "rule of thumb" to follow which JH could apply. If this is done it seems to make the project management relatively straightforward.

Stage 2. Features of the memo's

In exploring the work of the memos accomplishment on a line by line basis I became concerned that in attending to the sequential organisation I was missing another organisation. It seemed there was an organisation across the line by line, something like "transcontextual building blocks". The real features of the memo are those objects and events which are there for "any one to see". Thus that there is a "problem", that there are possible "solutions" is available for anyone to find. The shared observability and availability of these entities is fundamental to the particular sense of events and actions and are apparent within the memo.

What I am saying is that in the sequence of the memo presented above a number of 'interior features' of management work are made publicly observable. The concern is that by focusing on the line by line accomplishment of the memo's I was missing something of what was going on in the memo which was much closer to what, for those managers involved in sending the memo, would count as an adequate record of the work?

The managers attention to the memo is not as the presentation of specific lines but as the presentation of specific business. They are required to understand and attend to issues raised in previous lines of the same memo or even in different contexts. Francis (1982) refers to this as the "interactional particularity." This could mean that how the managers understand their work will be visible in the up and coming formulations. That is, the participants attend to the particular features of the interactional circumstances comprising the memos.

It raises the question of just what organisation, what kinds of relationships are to be looked at in exploring managerial work? In the following section I attempt to raise for consideration a number of features of the memo one has a sense of on reading it, and to explore what it is that their accomplishment consists in, *what in fact they do*. One might argue the sets of happenings that I outline are constructs, but they are not my formulations. These are noticings about real world phenomenon, they are members' constructions. What I as analyst do is "read" them out of the data.

A fascinating discovery is that at times we can see the participants orientate to particular devices in the memo. They reveal an understanding of its normative organisation. The managers sensitivity to the work the memos must do is apparent from the delicate devices and features recoverable within. What sense is to be made of the particular features is something for the parties to work out from, and in, the memo.

For the managers it is a taken for granted fact that their interests might not be agreed with by the other parties. There is work to be done to achieve agreement.¹⁴ It is a collaborative accomplishment, an interactionally asserted relation. Whatever the outcome of interaction it will be the product of courses of events which comprise the interaction. The achievement of desired outcomes is something to be worked out and attained. What they are about is something to be made accountably factual.

The matter of interest here is that on some occasions agreement is witnessable and explicitly produced as a local achievement within the conversation. Concern for agreement is an explicit and productive activity; something the manager makes happen; something which both JH and JB are extremely sensitive to. If the managers are to achieve collaborative actions then some form of agreement is needed. I seek to look at one feature of 'achieved agreement', that relating to the determination of an acceptable account of their work in the memo. A feature of the memo which particularly interested me was the interactionally attempted agreement as to the nature of the problem. Rather than being an agreement achieved as a matter of assertion (JH does not simply ask to go over budget and JB does not simply give a "yes" reply) it is negotiated, worked up insitu, achieved by the creation of a relation of similarity between accounts.

I had no independent access to the real scale of the problem that concerned JH and JB, its objectivity was constructed by them within the memo. The problem is made visible, not by careful reasoned argument or empirical demonstration but by brief statements of technical details and modifications of assertions. The 'business of the memo' is thus formulated over a series of disclosures.

Management problems do not exist as established bodies of knowledge, thus notions of agreement are consequential to what 'the facts of the problem' become for those involved in their discovery. By focusing on the working up of agreement in problematic circumstances of management I do not mean to imply that the involvement of agreement is limited to such circumstances. Reaching agreement is found to be significant in many spheres of management work: negotiation, decision making etc.

The organisation of the memo is seen to have something of the character of turn-take utterance pairs. However, given that it is not as immediate as in conversation, question and answer sequences are actually offered by the same author and spatially linked. This practice allows alternative assertions to be raised in the memo. These appear not as troubles but as a socially organised practice for the manager which generates a potential equivocality in the memo. Such equivocality may be conducive to agreement, allowing in

this instance JH to put forward a range of different assertions and JB the potential to select a preferred response.

Following Lynch's (1985) interest in achieved agreement I place emphasis on one constituent feature of achieved agreement particularly relevant to the study of management work, that of modification. The notion of modification formulates the way the writers change their descriptions or accounts, in this instance a problem telling, in the face of expected or asserted expressions of contrary opinions by the receiver. As Pomerantz (1984) suggests the modifications work to 'make visible' the object of reference- the problem of an overspend. What is interesting is how the parties manage the pursuit of agreement through the device of modification.

In memo 1 JH describes the problem in terms of costs. He asserts, lines 12-17, that there will be more than "the one or two minor increases" already allowed. This is reasserted and the problems seen as "relatively small increases in costs" by lines 55-56. In memo 2 however JB is not prepared to agree to the characterisation of the problem. He achieves a modification of it by offering a re description. He achieves a re description by emphasis on the significance of the costs eg lines 18, 23, 25 and not on their size. This characterises the problem not as one of calculability but of the essentiality of employing Organisational rules for correct project management. By reasserting the figures JH has given him, JB agrees with JH's telling but he does not agree in an unqualified manner. He works up a different frame of interest, modifying the assertions of JH in memo 1 within the sequential environment of memo 2. JB in memo 2 may therefore be found to be withholding agreement.

A common feature of modification in disagreement sequences is the prefacing of reassertions with "I think." Lynch (1985) suggests this is not often used in first assertions, yet we find JB relies upon such a preface. This is interesting because although it could have been heard as unassertive, here it seems to work to withhold agreement. It admits that JB may be inclined to disagree or the account may later be found to be wrong. It marks the up & coming account as differing from that of memo 1. It allows for modification by its openness to revision/ redescription. It implicates doubt by locating the account within a personal source (JB) rather than with what anybody would say. The statement provides the materials out of which both agreement and disagreement can be managed.

The use of 'subjective prefaces' such as "I think", "as I understand it", "it now seems likely", "I guess", "I imagine" etc by JH accomplishes a similar sense of uncertainty. JH's assertion is heard less as noting an immutable fact and more as opinion, as such it remains open to modification by JB. Line 20, 24, make apparent the possibility of qualification and that it is an approximate figure, line 37, 42. The expression of

uncertainty does the interactional work of providing a way to accommodate disagreement by preempting a challenge as well as retaining the account as open for negotiation.

By offering a range of potential arguments JH might be seen to be trying to reduce the possibility of counter assertions by JB. However, on this occasion JH does not succeed in his work, an option for JB in his reply is reformulation. JB takes this up relying on the opportunity to recharacterise the problem. He uses asides to modify the form of discovered features of the problem. Thus JB's explanation in lines 14, 16, 19, 23, 26 reformulates the "problem" in such a way that it supports both the initial explanation and yet allows a different interpretation of their position to be established. JB reverses some of the concerns of JH, & disaffiliates himself from JH's characterisation of the project by recharacterising the discovered history of its status.

The managers in the memo are found to undertake some quite delicate modification work aligning their accounts, so as to be seen not to explicitly disagree whilst modifying/reformulating the account. The role of modifications is found to be significant in allowing re characterisation of assertions in the move towards agreement. The finding here is that agreement is a local achievement visible in the sequential development of conversational utterances.

Making Visible the problem

The previous interest in modification and agreement as features of the memo reveals how the two managers show delicate interactional preferences in their formulation of the problem. They each address the problem of the budget overrun but in a different manner thus giving it a varied face. They reveal different orientations, different frames. What is interesting is just how they make this visible & observable, that is how they objectify it. We find it to be a locally discovered & constructed accomplishment.

In the course of assertions and reassertions the parties discover features of the problem and objectify them. The issue of budget overspend is complex. It is not just a matter of seeing what is in the figures and then working out what is to be done. What the figures reveal is something JH & JB determine, working this out seems to require exploring both the causes of the overspend; such as the shortcomings in the specifications, line 13, and its contingent features; such as the need for authorisation of the extra costs, line 59.

In memo 1 the overspend is made observable, reportable, understandable by the reformulation of the problem into a figurative summary.¹⁵ The figures are what Anderson, Sharrock & Hughes (1989) refer to as an "accountants object", they are the product, artifact of a series of accounting procedures. In lines 45-50 an accounting structure is imported which acts to 'mock up the project.

The format of the problem in figures, lines 45-50, as a 'balance' was a useful mechanism to represent it, it now became formalised and constitutive within the memo. The sum stands for both parties as something like the representation of events, it strengthens JH's assessment as to what "The likely final position looks at the moment like". It functions to summarise the project's costs in such a way as to enhance the legitimacy of JH's request for authorisation to exceed budget. It allows the account to seem to proceed according to rational methods of calculation. From what I knew of the managers' work relationships JB was aware of JH's area of work. Thus what the figures display was not a problem for JB, clearly he knew a way to interpret their accuracy ; he knew what to look for and where.

It was not apparent whether JB had any independent standard of objectivity with which to decide the correspondence of JH's account with how the project costs really looked. In his reply his acceptance of JH's figures discloses an agreed to objectivity.¹⁶ The use of figures, numerical balances and costs to formulate was one example of how managers make visible their work to each other.

The objectification is continued in memo 1 by the use of limited personal pronouns or names in the description of the overspend. Passive description, the use of the passive voice "have been", "has been" contributes to the sense of JH being the helpless, absent, or irrelevant agent in the description. The request is thus read as a request for help which might be performed by any competent person, a party to the problem, and not necessarily a request to rectify mistakes.

I cannot access the costs construction as an empirically observable set of activities. The knowledge used to generate the figures was locally organised and as such it was unavailable for analytic reconstruction.

The manner of the memo's construction, its formulation is vital to the particular memo achieving the particular business at hand. JH and JB seem sensitive in their constructions to the manner in which their respective memo's will be received.¹⁷ The managers sensitivity to the memo's reciprocity seems most apparent in the work they do recognising and resolving the problem of an overspend.

A noticing in both memos is that ownership of the problem is nicely opaque. The problem of budget overspend is not formulated as resulting directly from anybody's mistakes; indeed the issue of what went wrong is skilfully avoided, achieved by offering the problem as almost inevitable, as the way things are. The need to request larger cost increases is set up as an inevitable state of affairs by the declarative assertions, "had no choice", "has been necessary." They make JH and his colleagues accountable for their action, but not in such a way that their behaviour seems at fault; it seems somehow

conferred by their position. The information on the project is imparted in the manner of statements. Such comments as line 22 "As far as I can see, NJB has signed an authorisation" suggests he is not a party to the full facts, downgrading his involvement.

The memo is thus formulated by JH with a seeming concern for his relationship to the task. It implicates objectivity, non involvement. Indeed he achieves a distancing from the events which has the consequence of reducing accountability. It is reminiscent of a factual account in the manner in which a report is offered. The reason for this disaffiliation is not apparent in the memo, but given that we know he is speaking to his Senior Manager one could presume any judgement of JH as involved in the projects management would be detrimental to the perceived competence of his management, as the project is over budget. Establishing the project's status as extraneous and self determining, by the failure to anchor ownership enables a reading of the project's course as being somehow inevitable and unmanageable. The relationship of JH to the trouble is thus established as one with specific knowledge of, but not ownership of, the project.

Given that management is frequently about troubles telling and offering problems for solution, to be able to tell the trouble and work up a solution without owning it, is to avoid being implicated with blame. I had a hunch that management was clearly about achievement in such a climate; therefore the competence to avoid recognisable failure is important for as one manager put it "keeping one's reputation and one's bonus". Given that we know JB is a senior manager and that budget overrun is not good business practice, to avoid taking ownership is an expected response.

In lines 18-19 JH makes ownership of the problem explicit, but the reading I take is that JH sets up a position where his responsibility is seen to be inherited, "since Les is no longer here." This may be taken as suggesting a *fait accompli* and an attempt to disassociate himself from blame. That JH has been "looking at" the situation weakens his involvement. It is suggestive of not being a party to events, removed from the sites of activity. The memo works to establish his relationship to the project as one qualified to comment on it, whilst simultaneously implying that he is not necessarily an agent in its events. It is hearable as 'a comment' on the 'possible' troubles that might arise.

It seems "presenting the evidence," making the request for problem resolution need not involve taking ownership. But JH must do some work within the memo to set up such a reading. JH must not only preempt reproach from JB but he must recognise explicitly the "error" & "shortcomings", for JB is less able to offer criticisms if they have already been made. Atkinson and Drew (1979) focus on justification and excuses in cross examination. They suggest recipients of questions often formulate defences in anticipation of cross examiner's questions ie prefacing anticipated blame allocations with a defence. I had a sense that something of a similar order was occurring here. JH explicitly attends to the

possibility that JB might have expected him to have taken certain actions. What he does not make explicit is the reason why he has no choice.

JH formulates appropriate next stages in the projects management providing what amounts to almost suggested solutions. JH works up to the request he makes; he tries to formulate the problem so that the outcome seems inevitable, the sensible business solution. A skill of wider import to managers might be the ability to both point up potential problems and address them within the same instance. Thus offering their resolution and dealing with possible objections that another party might raise before they occur.

The memo reveals how the working up of a troubles telling and request is sensitive to and pre-emptive of an expected stance from the recipient. JH anticipates questioning directed at showing he was at fault. These self initiated references to their reasons for taking action are perhaps strongest evidence for saying that we see JH anticipating some blame and reproach from JB for such increased costs. By addressing these as yet unsurfaced responses there is a lovely economy, JH in effect, by preempting JB's response, saves interactional time.

JB's reply is sensitive to JH's formulation, he too leaves unaddressed the question of responsibility & ownership. Thus line 18, memo 2, refers to "wrong assumptions" without characterising anything about the nature of the event, except that it is "extremely unfortunate". This is useful when JB is speaking of a potentially shameful matter, because by leaving out the character of what happened JB is sensitive to JH's formulation.

Memo 2 is formulated more as an inquiry which seeks to locate the problem on the basis of a retrospective examination of what went wrong. Given that we know that management is about control to reward and punish, it could be expected that this overspend would be criticised, that JB would be concerned to establish ownership of the problem. However we find that the memo in its response reproaches in a very subtle manner and works to do other interactional things. Error/blame is not made explicit; it is attributed to an independent "environment." The cause of the problem is located as the absence of a "contingency", a recognition by JB that an aspect of normal, routine project management is missing.

Thus the "public" concern is with the cause of the problem not at the level of the individual but with the working practices. However, one gets a sense that the problem is carefully formulated so as to make quite clear that failure by individuals to use those working practices has been noticed. The "we should" formulates the problem as one JB is involved in too; he therefore implicates himself with blame. This seemingly lessens the

blame for JH, yet we know that JB was not a party to the day to day running of the project; if JH is honest the blame accords to him.

Accusing and complaining are treated as "sensitive" activities by both parties; activities to avoid being explicitly raised. They are better left unsaid, though, that is not to find that they are not done. This suggests the importance of implicit meanings within the memo's. The use of asides enables JB to provide his assertion with an alternative, though hidden meaning¹⁸. It implicates blame by providing the account with a comment that these troubles were avoidable. Comments which we find disagree with memo 1 implying JH has misunderstood the actions needed to manage the project.

As the events which caused the overspend are formulated by JB as historic it acts to make blame redundant, "that is water under the bridge". Yet JB, although not in the position to control formulation of the problem in the sense of being able to prevent the budget error from occurring, is able to exhibit some retrospective control by the manner of his formulation. JB can formulate the problem as avoidable in the future; and resolveable in the manner of how one accounts for the costs. His formulation retains aspects of JH's account as a problem, but one not of the costs but of how he identifies them. In a sense he makes the problem the fact that JH makes something problematic that didn't have to be.

Given that the memo communication differs from conversation in that the response is not immediate, the importance of an adequate display of data/ explanation of events is heightened. The "facts" cannot as easily be challenged & subsequently asserted & reasserted by the recipient because the displays of response which would allow for subsequent modification are delayed. In conversational exchanges agreement by the recipient could mark early in the exchange that a speaker need not provide anything further to index a co-understanding, or indicate when assertions were being challenged. In such cases modification could occur dependent on local, interactive circumstances. In the instance of memo sending no such clues as to reception can be relied upon.

Formulating a Request

Memo 1, lines 57-59 explicitly requests a decision or some guiding action from the receiver, JB. Given that JB is JH's senior manager we might expect such a request for direction. Lines 57-59 make explicit that the request is for authority to accept the increased costs. In the formulation of the request we see that it relies upon earlier work to set up a sequentially possible response from JB; that of either an acceptance or a rejection. It exhibits a sensitivity to JB. Line 16 "I think" displays a potentiality for rejection by its tentativeness, it is not explicitly a question. In fact by its tentativeness it is more like an invitation, "I think we've now", "do you want us". The alternatives provide an invitation to a different order of response. The invitation stands as a suggestion as to

how the present communication might best be continued, it is constructed as a possible solution to the problem raised within the memo. Given the potentiality or actuality of rejection, the detailed version of events that memo 1 offers might be an attempt to deal with the potential for rejection by justification of the request. Thus we can see how the memo is built up specifically to deal with the problem of rejection and to invite certain responses from its recipient JB.

The request orientates to the surrounding context of the memo for a display of circumstances necessitating the request. It is sequentially placed within the memo. It is in relation to the legitimate history of the project. As such there is almost a provision of evidence supporting the request ie the state of affairs leading to it is inferable from the budget costs detailed. By sequential I refer not merely to its subsequent occurrence after a position statement, but rather to a specifically sequential organisation, a "conditional relevance." For the request utterance is conditionally relevant on project details.

The request is formulated explicitly in line 16 "where some formal decisions needs to be taken" and the following 40 lines might be seen as a justification for this request. Lines 57-59, "Do you want to talk?... or are you happy for us to allow?.." narrows the request and formulates the appropriate reply as either of two responses. By such work JH formulates JB's relationship to the task. He sets up a possible structure for JB's reply. A preferred response. Of interest was the query like tone of JH's request. The work of such statements as "presumably there is nothing that can be done about the 1989 budget error" seems to be constructed so as to be hearable as a reasonably obvious deduction and not as one that raises a direct question.

The use of the queries here is a way the managers raise issues for attention without revealing a lack of information on their part, or obliging the recipient to attend to it or give information. I was reminded of Garfinkel's (1967) comments that one of the tasks involved in "managing rapport" consists

"of managing the stepwise course of the conversation in such a way as to permit the investigator to commit his questions in profitable sequence while retaining some control over the unknown and undesirable directions in which affairs over the course of the actual exchange may move." pg 15

Formulating a response

Memo 2 clearly offers more than just a straightforward reply to the request of memo 1. JB uses the right to reply to do work other than just granting a request. The business of the memo as a response is set up so as to be educative and evaluative; formulated in such a manner that a distinction is brought to bear between what should have been and what has been done. JB's response achieves something like a refocusing of the topic of the memo offering an alternative formulation reliant on the formulation of the topic memo 1

sets up. The response fits/aligns with the topic of memo 1 but the response does not proffer a direct solution to the requests. It provides a reasonable, alternative explanation.

There is an educative tone to the memo which perhaps comes from JB's sharing of his reasoning, "it was almost predictable", "we should have", "these costs always do". It gives the memo the character of advice giving, for it provides information & evaluative comment. Given JB's position one could reasonably accept this reading. The personalised nature of JB's responding memo modifies the grantings of lines 29-36. It makes visible a monitoring of the projects course, minimally performing a check/review whilst simultaneously the memo is designed so as to be sensitive to the interactive requirement of maintaining an ongoing relationship; thus JB does this "telling" without invoking a patronising or accusatory tone.

Given that some wrong assumptions have been made and an overrun of budget has occurred one might have expected a reproach from JB. The reproach appears very much as an undercurrent within memo 2. Pomerantz (1984b) tells us that

"If interactants talk about fellow interactants blameworthy actions they may be seen to be accusing, reprimanding, chastising etc their fellow interactants. Wrong doing is often seen as a sensitive action to perform, and as such may be done with caution." pg 618

Thus JB may be seen to avoid confronting JH with declarative assertions which would be tantamount to accusing or reprimanding JB. He achieves a position where what has happened is characterised as unbusiness like, not the way things are usually done and puts JH in a position of being a party to this criticism.

Drew and Holt's (1990) ¹⁹ work on idioms led me to consider what work line 14 could be doing within memo 2. In the line, "we should have set up a contingency as one always does ...but that is water under the bridge," JB is expressing regret at the absence of a contingency fund. The idiom is used to formulate just what the status of the problem is. It explicitly formulates an ending to JB's reproach. The idiom could actually be taken to destroy the point of the complaining for it clearly implicates the mistake as having been done and therefore in some sense to be forgotten. However, the work of JB detailing the circumstances of the mistake is clearly distinguished from the explicit formulation or naming of the next action to be taken by JH, thus it has some purpose in being raised.

Perhaps the egregious character of the idiom make it somehow forgiving in the extreme or does its 'ordinariness' weaken its force? It appears as an interactional device which enables JB to avoid the performance of a relevant next activity, a rebuke which would normally follow from an identification of a mistake, while making it explicit as a possible legitimate option. Its very inclusion serves to bring the mistake to JH's attention and shows it is recognised by JB but in a negative, inverted manner; it is almost retracted by

the invocation of the idiom. It serves to remove the blame and reproach from its supporting circumstantial detail. A particular delicacy of the idiom is that it claims innocence after a critical comment has been made. It thus works to avoid conflict. In part it provides much more than just comment on the specific problem; it may in part contribute to the educative tone of the reply.

JB implicates JH with different rights and obligations from those JH might have expected given his memo request. JH will assume full reciprocity of the trouble in that he receives the communication. For memo 1 the focal point is the problem and its properties, but in memo 2 the "essential concern" is not the dispatching of a task, not just telling what the next activity to be done is, but it is educative. JB sees the problem differently from JH. His advice is the outcome of experience. There is a mild version of affiliation in JB's "I agree that" but it may be more an attempt to humanise, by implying a sharedness and serves to soften what might seem instructional.

When participants construct reproaches for offences negotiations may frequently occur concerning the responsibility of the alleged offender. By keeping undercurrent his blaming JB might curtail the potentiality for JH to attempt to negotiate the position in a subsequent reply. JB utilises the right of uninterrupted reply to produce a sequence of assertions suggesting that for him the position JH recounts should have been apparent, that "reasonable" inferences would have avoided the problem. These are given as so commonplace as to be established business policies eg the setting up of a contingency and recognition of the way consultants work (how they escalate costs). The attribution of blame is built into the 'categorical relationships' involved in specifications of the particular event, since someone acting under the category 'manager' is expected to carry out a particular set of actions, including knowing how to manage a project. Accordingly the sequence of assertions JB makes about knowing "in hindsight", "almost predictable", "these costs always do" can be seen to be leading to an accusation that JH should have been able to see how "such a project" should have been managed.

While advancing this comment JB tries to soften each assertion by the appending of forgiving remarks "water under the bridge" etc before proceeding with the next in the chain. This reproach-forgiveness device places JH in a dilemma by making explicit the normal way of doing things as different from how JH has presented the project management. JB invites JH's recognition that he has done differently from normal and hence invites JH to be a collaborator in his own accusations. The reply is unique in many respects from other types of management communication since it provides the writer with an immense authority to formulate, uninterrupted, his communication.

In line 16 by appending the term with "deceiving" and ending it with "thought it unnecessary" JB does not allow for a counter assertion from JH. The characterisation

displays a sensitivity to the fact that there may be a lack of full agreement; but marks its claim explicitly as not open to negotiated agreement, it is directly asserted.

It seems in the formulation of the reply and response that JB and JH are operating from different frames. JH does not attribute the overspend to the failure to set up a contingency as a source of the trouble. Yet JB attributes and orientates his response to the trouble as the failure of JH to set up a contingency.

By the aside, "we should have set up a contingency as one always does on such a project" JB appears to invoke reference to a regular/established, known in common procedure; an implicit social agreement. This shared management exemplar in the working situation may then be seen by JB as a solution, a way to explain the problem of unexpected costs, "the £2000 was almost predictable", "the £6000 is likely to grow somewhat, these costs always do". The invocation of the "contingency" by JB is a strong reminder that a solution hitherto unthought of by JH was possible. The aside "as one always does" suggests management conduct based on convention, and points to certain expected norms of behaviour.

JB was revealing a preference, almost prescriptive, as to how a project should be "managed." This struck me as interesting for it was as if he was espousing a logic of correct management. It occurred to me that here was a norm of proper conduct. It is evidently too late in this instance to change the events, but for JB there is something to be gained by raising it. This is the educative nature of management, the preparation for how things will be next time. It was revealed to me later in the meeting with JB, where he talked about the memo's objectives, that his concern had been to "reproach" JH.²⁰ He said "part of our job is to convey a message, it's to create impressions so he knows we've assessed him". JB had assessed JH and this influenced the nature of his reply. The reply was permeated through and through by qualitative judgements that have their logic in lineaments of experience.

For JB there were concerns over the impression his reply gave. He did not want to be seen as "nagging on about it," he wanted "to criticise, but not to get his back up over it", to offer it "as a gentle reminder for next time. I'm not sought of criticising but it is a hint that I'm not happy....for some rather obscure reason I wasn't involved in the setting this one up, so I'm not in the position to criticise but a gentle polite reminder. I mean he knows too he should have set up a contingency."

For JB a major concern of the reply was to "develop" JB. He said "It was proper for me in an educational role to remind him that he should have got it right. It's about trying to pin him down to a really good think." Thus JB's response had little to do with the size of the

costs; in fact he confided they were “minuscule” against the cost structure of the Chief Accountants department.

Reflections on the chapter

The foregoing account of a pair of memos is provided as a preliminary chapter, as a way of introducing the situated details of aspects of management work. I believe such an approach moves from traditional views which have in the main addressed memos as artifactual accounts of management work, to a view which recognises their situatedness as part of the practical circumstances of managerial work. It is to take up an interest in the fact that management work is done within the memo viewing them as more than just records of the work. They are not approached as disengaged descriptions of management work, they are part of that work.

The construction and interpretation of the memos is the phenomenon of interest, the accomplishment of concerted interactional work. It is to suggest that in making accountable the sense of what they were about, what the managers' work was to be was realised and achieved. What I show is the managers' work in setting up a memo, their interactional concerns and competencies. Such concerns as how they were perceived by each other, how they were to work up the problem were not produced as disengaged "concerns" but were intimately bound to the memo's construction.

The study points to an orientation by the managers towards the appearance of their work, within the memo. Thus we learn that to do management work requires attention to its presentation and impression, the guise that the work is done under. These are significant concerns for the managers, subtly orientated to, organised and negotiated in the finest detail.

A direct and detailed analysis of the memo reveals that it is far more complex than prevailing studies have recognised. Investigating the work of the memo reveals that it is reliant upon the competencies similar to those of ordinary everyday conversation.

The analytical approach I have taken to the memo has accorded a visibility to the interactional accomplishment²¹ of an instance of managerial work. I was interested in pursuing this in relation to some of the other data I had collected. Early in my talk with the managers they had suggested a circumstantial visibility was accorded to the work in the various meetings that comprised a part of their work. This seemed an interesting area to explore given that I had data of naturally occurring interaction within these settings. It is to these I now turn, seeking to explore just what this analytic approach can reveal of the social organisation displayed within the occasions. In both instances the concern of the parties is with what is recognisable as something like planning.

Notes

- ¹ I was not alone in having reservations as to whether there was adequate research at the empirical level. Willmott (1984, 1987) and Hales (1986) amongst others express similar concerns.
- ² This a view similar to that of Weinstein study (1975) on the work of truck driving as the achievement of a reading of self-reported log books, & Garfinkel's (1967) famous work on reading clinic reports.
- ³ Such a line of enquiry as Lynch (1985) takes in a study of a science laboratory, Livingston (1986) on Mathematics and Francis (1986) in exploring negotiation.
- ⁴ This point is made by Mulkay (1986) who says a way of approaching the analysis of written texts would be to see how far they rely on interpretative forms found in speech. Such an approach to textual analysis has been recommended by Atkinson (1983) who proposes that an adequate understanding of how texts are produced and responded to may remain elusive so long as the issue is pursued without making close comparative reference to how talk works.
- ⁵ Interestingly, observation of the managers revealed instances where receipt of a memo was not taken by them as an obligation to reply personally. Occasionally the memo was "re-directed" for other, usually subordinate managers to reply. There was an issue of appropriateness to be dealing with the request which was different from ordinary language practices where one has perhaps more of an obligation to reply.
- ⁶ Perhaps unfairly one might select as an example such work as appears in Flowers & Hayes (ed) (1986), Fielden & Dvleck (1984).
- ⁷ In one particular text that I explored "Perceiving structure in professions prose" the authors, Colomb and Williams (1986), look at what writers do or readers experience when they try to describe what constitutes form, structure, organisation, design and disposition in professional writing. The study claims to have accounted for crucial components of professional writing within context and purports that a number of conventional writing strategies can be accepted as more effective than others. What it fails to explore is how these are brought off as 'practical accomplishments'.
- ⁸ My understanding of sequential follows that of Sack's; events which are occurring one after the other, or are in some before or after relationship and have some organisation as between them.
- ⁹ In much the same way as Livingston (1987) in his ethnomethodological study of mathematics suggests one misses the nature of the work of mathematics if one does not work through the procedure for deriving the proof of the theorem, the reader here needs to be familiar with the memos detail.
- ¹⁰ Garfinkel speaks of "tendentious" uses of key expressions in an argument, tendentious suggesting to the reader that the expressions eventual sense can not be known from an immediate definition or interpretation but that this is discoverable over the course of the text.
- ¹¹ I acknowledge a debt to those who explored extracts of data with me, my supervisor, Dr David Jones, Dr David Francis at Manchester Polytechnic, Dr David Golding and colleagues at Humberside Business School, Elizabeth Holt and colleagues at York University and Mark Neale and colleagues at Bournemouth University.
- ¹² By which I mean Lynch' definition "a structure that is constituted in the relationship of a modification to an original assertion."
- ¹³ Wooton (1981) in a study of the management of grantings and rejections by parents in request sequences suggests

"grantings are initially stated without delay".

14 A comprehensive treatment of the topics of agreement /disagreement is provided by the ethnomethodological studies of Pomerantz and Sacks (1976) and Lynch (1985). For a thorough treatment of achieved agreement and the contribution of Sacks see Pg 188 Lynch (1985)

15 The interest in instances where numerical formulation of one kind or another enter into arguments of a non mathematical nature are few. For a review of these and interesting work on quantification rhetoric (the manner in which numerical and non numerical quantity formulation are deployed when proposing and undermining arguments cases) see Potter et al (1991)

16 The topic of objective disclosure of a phenomena is excellently treated by Livingston (1983) in his study of the production of a mathematical proof.

17 Indeed I am put in mind of the following quote

"I have been told, my dear Socrates, that what a budding orator needs to know is not what is really right, but what is likely to seem right in the eyes of the mass of people who are going to pass judgement. (Plato Phaedrus)"

18 Following Goldings (1991) comments on the data I began to reflect on the notion of these as hidden agendas. Hidden agendas are interesting in terms of how they are dealt with interactionally for they cannot be revealed without making something of the situation which is not publicly available. By this I mean with respect to the memos here that JH and JB cannot make explicit reference to the undercurrents of the memos without raising potentially contestable points. Thus, should JB raise the fact that JH's memo is constructed so as to mitigate blame he will be guilty of attributing a motivation not explicitly readable in the memo. To do so would be difficult to prove given that the agenda JH has was hidden. Without evidence JB's statement will stand as merely a hunch, potentially accusatory and destructive of JH's position. For JB to formulate a reply which explicitly reproaches JH's handling of the project is to address JH's ownership of the problem; something which JH's memo does not admit to.

19 Holt unpublished PhD work on the use of Idioms in ordinary language (1990) and paper presented at the 1989 Conference on Discourse Analysis, Trinity College Dublin

20 I was aware on looking at the data prior to JB's revelation of something going on, yet something not being explicitly addressed. There was something in the interaction that the parties did not publicly orientate to, but which they attended to, something they discovered within the memos. Both memos seemed delicately constructed and so perhaps concerned with "impression management", however, it seemed there was more than this going on. Clearly work could be done implicitly; and who was to say whether this implicit work might not be more significant than the explicit business of approving an overspend? Could it be that one can see in memo 1 more than just a telling of a trouble / problem? Is the work being done more about legitimising, covering oneself, deflecting potential criticism? Surely these are significant features of management work. In memo 2 is it less a response offering a solution to a problem and more a concern to educate the receiving manager in how he should have managed the project?

21 I do not offer an explication of the wider social organisation of the memo; the requirements of the system, what makes it work and what it works upon, the technical knowledge, standardised communication practices, the local routines that these practices fall into and so on. These were areas I might have explored, for the memo's are the product of socially organised work, "accountable" as documents widely used within business, available as objects which may be debated, discussed, argued over, defended etc.

“Not men and their moments

Rather moments and their men”

Goffman. Interaction Ritual. 1967.

Chapter 3- “What do we do next?”: Aspects of planning the work.

In the previous chapter I examined the work of a management memo as an interactional accomplishment. In this chapter I want to continue this interest in how particular features of managerial life may be accomplished; to discover within an extract of data taken from a management meeting some of the actual features that made it *just that* meeting. The interest of the chapter is to explore the particular organisation that makes the work being done on this occasion discoverable, that is to say exploring just what its 'recognisability' consists in.

The data is presented in the form of a transcript (appendix iii) and thus presents talk as data. The meeting, which provides the data for this chapter, took place between two Senior managers who I refer to as DB & DW. Both DB & DW work within the same Organisation, though within different divisions. Observation of the managers in the meeting revealed this activity to be primarily a verbal affair.

The chapter continues the methodological interest in developing an adequate empirical investigation of management work that Chapter 2 had begun. Further, it develops an interest in management talk as the work, an interest aroused by the fact that sociological sense might be given to the proposal that management work is “talking work”. It is an approach which suggests that the accomplishment of particular actions is achieved through language.

The chapter evolved from my observations of the managers at work, I was interested by the fact that I knew them to be doing managerial work. I recognised the particular activities; yet just what did this recognisability consist in? I felt tempted having studied a few managers at work to cast my report in terms of comments about the features that my ‘common sense’ allowed me to see going on in the various occasions of management work that I was a party to.

It was all too easy to “retrospectively” make sensible the pattern of social relations that led me to understand the occasion I observed as an occasion from a meeting concerned with problem solving, planning, decision making or whatever, to conceptualise these activities without ever inquiring into how they had been done¹.

The extract (appendix iii) came from a meeting between two senior managers which might, as will subsequently be revealed, in lay terms be characterised as planning. Thus it offered a possible source for exploring some of the socially organised characteristics of a planning meeting. Indeed on the basis of what Garfinkel (1967) refers to as the analyst's "vulgar competence" I had understood it to be an occasion where planning was being done. While I recognised that this could be just such an occasion the locally organised details of the work remained elusive. The existing models of planning² failed to provide detailed access to planning as a 'practical accomplishment' in the manner of a daily accomplishment. The neglect of such issues of 'recognisability' served to encourage my interest in the social accomplishment of the phenomena.

I am conscious that to identify this as a planning meeting³ is to have characterised the activity for the reader when to recognise just what the data shows cannot be known before the analysis. The issue of generalisability is a point to which I will return. However, here I wish only to explain to the reader my interest in this particular instance of data. My interest in the data as an occasion of planning is because this is how one of the managers, DB, characterised the meeting, as a "site of management work" and an occasion of "planning"⁴. This is how the interaction was intelligible to him; and as I have said on an initial hearing and inspection of the meetings transcript it seemed an activity something like planning.⁵

In a sense this chapter provides another exercise in the close examination of the detailed organisation of some activities of management and thus one might put the argument forward that what particular activity I chose to study was less important than the question of how I was to look at it. I attend to both, for I recognise that how I looked at things would determine what I saw. That is to say the findings are sensitive to the operationalisation⁶ of a mode of analysis.

A central question became then how was the work being done in the meeting to be appropriated? The analysis follows Chapter 2 in its employment of insights from ethnomethodology and in utilising the resources of Conversation Analysis. It is to treat the commonsense everyday events of management as achieved by the members themselves, organised for the specific business at hand, and to see ordinary conversational practices as playing a part in accomplishing the structural or institutional features of this occasion. From such a perspective the practice of ordinary conversation becomes central in elucidating the structure of the activity.

One of the managers, DB, in talking of the particular meeting from which the extract is taken proposed that it was "a meeting to plan and to finalise the vision for future systems development." His characterisation, and in particular a comment he made prior to the

meeting; that on this occasion I would see them “doing planning” led me to explore the data in some depth.

Planning has been identified by theorists of management⁷ as a key function of the managers' work. As such it interested me as a potential activity to explore and an activity that seemed at first glance to be occurring within this occasion of interaction.

Preliminary analysis left me with the opinion that what for the managers was characteristic of “planning” and what I took to be important might be different; the managers might encounter planning in a different way. Sharrock & Button (1991; 151) highlight the tension between 'knowledge for its own sake' and 'knowledge for practical purposes'. That the social actor might know what he is doing, is for him to know his world as “knowledge in the service of practicality”. ‘Planning’ could be used to refer to both an occasion and a kind of activity; there is “holding planning meetings” as well as “doing planning meetings.”

It was also apparent from observation of the managers at work that when something is not announced as a planning meeting this is not to say that planning does not go on. Thus planning was both the name given to an activity by the managers and also the name of a socially organised activity, asserted in the immediate interaction of the meeting. This affiliates with a point raised by Francis (1982) in a study of Negotiation and I acknowledge his precedence. One cannot assume that planning as an activity and planning as the name for a socially organised event are the same. This raised the problem of just how one might address the activity so as to reveal planning's observable and reportable detail in a way which did not idealise the detail by extrinsic description. This problem was not resolved by the members' orientation to their work, that is not to say their constructs and practical theories were inadequate; they were adequate for their 'practical purposes', for 'labelling' an activity, identifying future tasks etc.

In first characterising the data as an occasion of ‘planning’ I had been in danger of seeing the instance of activity under scrutiny as being

“typical or representative of the whole category that they instance”
Sharrock and Anderson. (1982/3) pg 172

Yet it was quite clearly written in to a particular time in the managers' diary, and had concerns particular to specific tasks, Organisational issues etc. It was for the parties themselves *that meeting*. Therefore I thought it worthy of examination for just what *that* consisted in. Such an approach would avoid generalising before being able to seriously claim to have understood what it was that was going on in any one occasion that let me recognise it as that activity.

Thus I seek to explore in detail this occasion of management activity to see what emerges as the work that the parties are doing and if this could advance our understanding of what planning as an activity consists in. Could the approach I develop in chapter 2 reveal something of how, given what observation found to be the chaotic nature of their work things get done?

Before I take the reader into the analysis I consider it useful at this point to outline in some general sense the literature on planning. Attending to the literature on planning is not to take issue with what is known about planning but to reveal how detailed observation and analysis of the practices in the course of the work is absent, to exemplify the point that the current interest in planning does not provide the empirical approach begun here. It sets my interest to inquire into the social and practical accomplishment of planning as a topic of enquiry, as exhibiting a very different interest from the main body of management literature.

I do not offer explicit and extended consideration of the standard literature on management processes and in particular planning. Trying to locate my work in relation to conventional studies and hence provide a framework from within which my proposals will be reviewed would prove to be cut short because there is a fundamental difference between the theoretical commitments of the paradigms.⁸ Thus I attend here to a limited selection of studies in order to substantiate my argument that there has been a comparative lack of interest in exploring what planning, organising, or other classical functions of management are like as 'social accomplishments.'

The literature on planning

Fayol (1949) had identified planning as the chief manifestation of management,

"the most apparent sign and most effective instrument being the plan of action."

For him the plan of action is at one and the same time, the result envisaged, the line of action to be taken, the stages to go through and methods to use. It is a kind of future picture wherein proximate events are outlined with some distinctiveness, whilst remote events appear progressively less distinct.

Luther Gullick (1937) is one of the few who offers a definition of what planning and organising consist in:

"Planning, that is working out in broad outline the things that need to be done and the methods for doing them to accomplish the purpose set for the enterprise. Organising, that is the establishment of the formal structure of authority through which work subdivisions are arranged, defined and co-ordinated for the defined objective."

This definition is offered here in order to introduce the proposal that a study of the locally organised details of planning and organising may provide more than just a

“filling out of such common understandings by empirical work.” Lynch, M 1985 pg 4

Current theorists such as Mintzberg, Stewart, Kotter and Reid have criticised⁹ the classical theories as offering a view of planning and organising as activities isolated from other happenings in the manager's day, which suggest such activities are done by managers at specific temporal points. They have pointed out, at least on the surface, that the observed behaviours of managers seem hard to reconcile with traditional notions of what managers do. The picture Stewart (1983,6) offers of a manager as

“someone who lives in a whirl of activity, in which attention must be switched every few minutes from one subject, problem and person to another, of an uncertain world where relevant information includes gossip and speculation.” Stewart (1983) pg 52

does not fit easily with more traditional notions of managerial work.

The conclusion drawn by these more recent researchers is that the notion of the manager as strategist, thinker and planner is a myth (Mintzberg 1975) and that even Senior managers allow themselves to be diverted from their real work by constant interruption and 'capricious interpersonal contact.'

It is hard to fit the actual everyday behaviour of managers into categories like "planning", "organising", "controlling", "directing" and the like. Further to raise a point borrowed from Sharrock and Anderson (1982) the criticism could be raised that our understanding of the activity of Planning was only in terms of those features that are the same from one occasion of planning to the next, regardless of the range of other things that one might find to be going on in them.

Kotter (1982) suggests that

- 1) Planning and Organising are not very systematically done: appearing rather hit and miss and sloppy, and in addition
- 2) a lot of behaviour ends up being impossible to classify under conventional theory.

This, however, seemed to me to miss something that my observations of the managers revealed; because the managers did not make specific diary time to plan did not mean it did not occur.¹⁰ It could indeed still be a pervasive feature of their work, but of a different order than existing researchers have sought to explore. A different order than the members themselves recognised in their talk about their work. Those theorists who claimed to have explored such concepts as Planning and Organising could not be relied upon to have examined the production of the activity as a social interactional accomplishment.

The literature of strategy and planning on examination seemed to me to employ a process of abstraction and simplification, employed I presumed to handle the complex of identifiable variables. This could be similar to the managers own use of the concepts, employed to organise and make sense of their activities whilst the appearance in actual occasions of their work is unexplored. It seemed one may know what strategy and plans are like as a series of methodic steps but not what it is to enact, not the detail of its 'contemporaneous achievement' as it unravels in the daily practices.

Theorists such as Mazzolini (1981), Schwenk (1984,1988), Das (1987) who adopt a mentalistic approach would be concerned with the importance of strategic cognitions of the two managers and it could be argued that my examination of the managers' talk takes for granted their individual perspectives. To my mind such an approach imposes a static, homogeneous view of strategy /planning, unable to account for the mutually collaborative qualities of management interaction, what ethnomethodologists and Garfinkel see as an 'ongoing accomplishment of the concerted activities of daily life.' It fails to give adequate attention to the interactive domain and its importance in the practical accomplishment of planning. The work of reaching agreement as to what the plans consist in that is displayed in the meeting does not have to bear any relationship to whether the parties agree in terms of their personal interests and attitudes. The plans are factual in so much as they are witnessable events.

Sapienza (1983) attempts to recognise the interactive domain discussing the development of shared analogies which help frame strategic decisions. Yet once again this analysis is not placed within the routine of everyday life. The process that involves the creation of a shared vocabulary among the decision makers through discussions of problems and the emergence of shared images to define the situation is not explored, nor recognised as a situated accomplishment.

The dissatisfaction with the literature confirmed my interest in situating the enquiry within a particular instance of management work and attending to its insitu organisation and formulation. To bring the current models of management work to bear on the instance under study would simply involve identifying, or attempting to identify instances of these activities in the behaviour of managers in situations of their work. Such a study presupposes that recognition of the activities which these descriptions are intended to instantiate is intuitively obvious.¹¹

The question becomes how these initial observations about the work and their relationship to the social organisation and interactional work can be handled so as to make empirically observable the previously unnoticed and particular pattern of details. As Schegloff (1991) succinctly puts it, without solutions to these problems

"we are left with a 'sense of how the world works' without its detailed explication" pg 48

The logic of the enquiry

The approach taken follows that of Sharrock & Anderson (1987), Moerman (1988) and is one of allowing a more "ethnographical orientation" to be worked up alongside an interest in the fine grained sequential analysis. Simple line by line analysis is found in Chapter 2 to miss something of the sequential design¹² analytically visible in the occasions of management work studied.

Sharrock and Anderson (1982) amongst others¹³ have recognised that the organisation and order of an activity is more than just a line by line accomplishment. They suggest activities have the structure they have because it has been projected from the outset, it occurred to me that the moment by moment organisation I find in the meeting could represent the achievement of a prior design. Thus it can be that for the managers the future development of the occasion may have been anticipated.

"It will not, however, have been idly anticipated in the sense that it was expected and it did happen. Rather it will have been actively anticipated in the sense that it will have been projected and action taken to bring it about as projected."

Sharrock & Anderson (1982/3) pg 177

Given that planning is about prospective order this observation that the organisation occurs on a momentary basis and one which projects the future course of events could be important.

Sharrock and Anderson's (1987) exemplary paper on "Executive problem finding" is a clear example of what can be gained by such an approach. It reveals the discovery, definition and solution of a problem as an interactional accomplishment. I acknowledge a debt to them, both in terms of revealing the boundaries of analysis and for their precedent in terms of developing a vocabulary through which one can articulate the interactional features of action.

The approach taken to the data does not attribute the participants in an activity with the ability to be consciously aware of exactly what is going on at a particular moment in time. In response to such a statement the reader may then ask, if they do not have clear-sightedness within the contemporaneous accomplishment of their work how do they work through the various issues necessary to constitute a meeting, to formulate a plan or whatever? A possible explanation was provided by Garfinkel's (1967) suggestion that it is possible for parties to orientate to and achieve a realisation of the activity they have accomplished. Garfinkel identifies this as "retrospective-prospective sense making."

The literature which I have discussed briefly earlier in the chapter is found to provide a view of management planning whereby the manager considers the goals to be sought, the requirements to accomplish them and organises a policy of working through them. This then replaces a policy of seeking to achieve all the objectives simultaneously with one which tries to obtain an ordered accomplishment. DB it appeared was working with some such "logic", he was not concerned with explaining the moment by moment accomplishment of his work nor with offering a contextualised version. Was it in this way that the managers were able to handle the various and often conflicting or excessively demanding requirements placed upon them?

When I observed the managers at work the courses of action that led to the construction of plans, the steps of the process were found to be extremely hard to keep track of. It was not as clearly observable an activity as the formal models suggest. Observation pointed to planning as anything but a rational linear event. Indeed it suggested that planning might be found to be an intricately structured phenomenon, created and maintained in the detail of talk and interaction.

What was interesting was that the managers in accounting for their work to me disattended to the detail of the works accomplishment. That is to say in talking to me about what planning consisted of the managers conceptualised it as a sequenced, logical, reasoned and objective activity. For DB the work that entailed the construction of an agenda, a list of areas for discussion compiled before the meeting provided an organisation to base discussion around in the meeting. DB recognised the fact that each manager brought an agenda and that these were completed independently, without collaboration between the managers and that they would "inevitably be departed from." However for DB these nevertheless reflected a prior design, they were adequate to explain the future course of the meeting. This was for DB understood as Planning, just as much as the activity they were to undertake in the meeting. Indeed DB explained, "the plans I take into the meeting will be the main determinant of the future courses of action DW and I decide in the meeting."

Following analysis it became apparent that the dates that DB and DW worked to, the contents of or even the nature of the tasks they attend to were not in reality certain, or predetermined, they were not imported from the agenda but negotiated, modified and attended to in a manner seemingly dependent on the occasion of interaction. For the managers the plans that emerged in the meeting were the unproblematic outcome of pre-existing agendas, motivations, shared understandings etc. This was interesting, was it I wondered that the co-ordination of actions to collaboratively agree future work was so easy?

In this chapter my interest in what is happening within the meeting raised a tension which proved to be irreconcilable. How was I to attend to the insitu order of the activity itself and to represent the social organisation of the activity as it was for the managers themselves? Resolution of this problem came by my deferring this latter interest until later in the study and it is this which informs Part 2. Thus the managers are presumed to have just that sense of their work that they display in the activity itself; revealed in the way they go about making judgements as to where they are, what they are to do next, in the opinions they express and the choices they make. The interest, as it was in chapter 2 is with the way *this* activity is put together. The underlying assumption is that one cannot talk about what the managers ordinarily think of as 'planning' as the same as 'planning' as a term for a particular socially organised activity.

The setting

Before I begin the detailed explication of what we find on examination of the extract, I offer a brief outline of who and what the meeting was concerned with. Such detail is not essential to making sense of the analysis offered, but will assist the reader in handling what proves to be a detailed transcript.

This section provides a commentary on what I knew of the circumstances of the meeting and what inevitably is part of my understanding of the situation. It is addressed to the context within which the meeting has to be understood and is informed by the characterisations of one of the managers, DB, with whom I spent several days. DB's 'characterisation' of the meeting was offered to me to "facilitate my understanding" and I offer it in the belief that it may make access to the data easier for the reader.

DB is a Senior manager within a major international airline, which in the last 5 years has moved from a "protected position" of a nationalised industry to its present position operating in a highly competitive international market. DB identified himself as a manager within the Information Management Division, and specifically responsible for one of the fourteen Business Centres; "Logistics" that comprised the division.

I observed and audio recorded the events of the meeting as part of an ongoing stream of events which constituted DB's working day, and its selection for use here remains somewhat arbitrary. On an initial inspection it seemed interesting as an occasion where just what he and another manager, DW were doing and where going to do was under 'inspection'. Meetings between these two managers occurred only monthly, even bimonthly and this particular appointment had already been rescheduled several times. It occurred over a lunch time within the privacy of DW's office.

Although I did not meet DW until the occasion of the meeting, throughout which I was present, DW was introduced to me (prior to the meeting) by DB as one of his 'customers'. DB explained that by "customers" he meant people within the airline to whom he supplies services. DW is Deputy Head of one of DB's customer groups but since DW's boss has not shown a strong interest in managing the I.T. portfolio and DW is an ex I.T. person he has taken on the portfolio.

Prior to the meeting DB identified a key issue impacting on the meeting. The I.M. centre is looking at what case tools the total division needs. Case Tools are highly specialised software packages used to build computer systems suited to particular needs of the various business centres. The R&D and testing of these is a slow and expensive business. His Business Centre needs a case tool immediately, in particular to achieve a major project "promised" to DW's Business Centre.

Internal politics and the different time scales existing between the demands for the project and time that the IT centre will take to deliver mean DB is concerned as to whether he should buy a case tool now or delay and wait for a central decision to be made. If he waits he penalises the customer. If he goes off on his own he must fight for autonomy and take a considerable risk in the eyes of his seniors. As yet DB has not gone off on his own and the result is he is "stalling" his customers, DW included, in the delivery of projects.

DB characterised this meeting as "an attempt to steer" DW's Business Centre towards agreeing "future plans". It was, he said concerned with "finalising the vision for future systems development in the Operations department and tying this in with expected developments within I.T." What struck me on hearing this characterisation from DB was that it provided a neat gloss for the activities but how does this characterisation stand in relation to the events of the meeting ? Does it explain the organisation that we find there? I could not judge if it did or did not because accepting such a characterisation, it seems to me, assumes we have found what is going on there. A fundamental question needs to be addressed before we could accept this characterisation. What is the order we find on this occasion and how is this order achieved? It was by answering this latter question that it seemed to me one might begin to address the question of what planning is.

Reading the transcript it becomes apparent that a number of abbreviations are employed by the managers. These, though not fundamental to the work of analysis, were considered by DB to be essential for me to "decode" the talk and grasp what was going on. DB outlined them whilst returning to his office after the meeting. I choose here to explain them for they inform a sense of the meeting, they are not unlike a member's glossary / phrase book.

EC is the name of a computer manufacturer being considered as supplier of the case tool and system for the department. The LBA refers to a system of company-wide meetings where the divisions look at the business implications of particular projects for the company as a whole. EIP is a specific set of meetings centrally requested and held by all Business Centres to consider integration with the engineering centres. CREW is a specific project to set up an on-line system for recording centrally all details appertaining to the cabin crew; payroll, hours worked etc. BP4's are a reference to a particular level in the Organisational structure. KRA's stood for Key Results Area and refer to the performance objectives given to each individual throughout the company.

Line by Line

Analysing the data on a line by line basis offers comments addressed to the particular achievements of this occasion of work. Such comment is relevant not only to an interest in planning and organising but to the other practices found on analysis of this specific instance. The achievement of planning cannot be analytically isolated from the ongoing stretch of talk as its very nature was constituted in the extended sequential and referential matters.

I am aware of the denseness of such a transcript and for that reason I will briefly outline what on hearing the tape I am aware of as the work the parties are doing.

I hear DB and DW working through a set of issues both know to be salient to their future work relations. DB is proposing his planned next action seeking DW's agreement. For DW whether this is accepted is dependent upon understanding what the up and coming "good news" that DB proposes will be called. This leads to an interesting activity I somewhat crudely refer to as "naming." Naming the plan is a serious business, it is found not just to be a classificatory exercise but to have practical consequences.

It is suggested and evidence evinced that this "naming" serves to make recognisable the promised work, to identify for the parties certain specific and identifiable things that DB should deliver. It is tentatively proposed that agreeing to a "name" for future work could be an important part of planning, making recognisable "just what projected work will consist of." Here the fact that DB & DW do not reach agreement as to what to call the proposed work means that plans for future work are not accepted. Interactional difficulties are found to have implications for the outcome of particular occasions of work: Can DB work to a plan which is not yet "signed off"-to borrow his phrase?

Finding out and agreeing where "we are at"

The extract's opening lines are concerned with the completion of agreement between DB & DW, as to future actions to be taken by DB, it reveals work being done sufficient to close the prior topic. Lines 1-3 seem by their construction as three final statements rather like a three part closing.¹⁴ It takes the shape of a summarising statement, prior to the suggestion of a topic change, line 3.

Line 1's formulation offers a projection of future work by DB; "we can do that ..and report back on progress" and is hearable as a closing by DB's promise of action on a future occasion outside of this meeting. It is not enough for DB to say "we can do that," we learn he will "report back" to DW. It is hearable as DB doing "making arrangements" for future work, the "we" referring to his Business Centre: Logistics.

The suggestion of some reporting of progress by DB, line 1-2, reveals the ongoing nature of the working relationship of the parties and may indicate that DB is accountable to DW. The promise to "do" seems somehow strengthened by the promise "to report back". It is suggestive of some keeping in touch, keeping informed. The ensuing silence of 7 seconds could indicate some difficulty interactionally. It is not clear if DB's preference is not to extend his turn, suggested by the fact that during the silence he looked down at his papers on the desk, or that he is searching for a next item. However in the absence of a response from DW he does extend the turn.

The opening is marked by two features; the long gap during which both managers shuffle papers they have brought and the return to the written agenda which is a guide to topics they wish to consider. DB line 3 is setting up the next issue for DW, work which at one level is organising. It is locational, characterising what the up and coming meeting will be. The term "back" invokes some return towards the place from which one came. This in line 3 is referral to the agenda that both DW and DB have brought to the meeting, here it clearly refocuses the work. It brings the parties' attention to the focus of the work. It is positional suggesting a return to the course of the meeting.

Line 3 "too.to go back to ye:your agenda" acts to refocus the work by a reference to some predefined order but it is not by reference to a specific point on the agenda, nor to a common agenda. It could be heard as giving DW the opportunity to introduce a new topic, a rather useful device to move the work on, or it could be checking out where they are in the agenda. Given the matter of fact delivery of the utterance I suggest the first hearing.

Line 5, "so we:re saying your priorities", DW appears to be referring to the earlier work between himself and DB. By holding over the prior topic and by providing a second

assessment DW reorientates to the topic-in-progress as being 'possibly' finished but not completely. DW seems to be attempting to find his way in the conversation, identifying what work is being done.

The talk appears as an explicit concern for the shared understandings between the managers as to where the focus of their work should be. It seeks a consensus, agreement as to what they are doing at this moment. It is a summary rechecking device, doing the work of saying "is this where we are now?" Over the course of the lines 1-9 DB & DW move towards agreement that their talk on the prior topic is finished. Over lines; 7, 9, 12 and in particular line 16 DB appears by his agreement tokens to display an attempt to close the topic, but DW does not allow DB to close. It appears he wishes to clarify exactly what DB has agreed to do in "between now and the LBA".

It seems from line 11 that the managers are exhibiting practices of working out an organisation not around dates in a calendar, but to particular happenings. It could be that a feature of planning is concerned with fitting events together, such as we see in line 11, agreeing to get future work done by particular times. In this instance it is a specific event that demands that the particular work is in place; "the LBA ...a week on Wednesday." It also appears as a phenomena dependent upon achievement of conversational actions, such as agreement. Unless DW accepts DB's assessment they cannot move on in their talk of their plans.

It seems DW wants to make clear the order of DB's work, to establish the priorities. This increasingly seemed important to the parties, essential for the organisation of the meeting. Line 11 DW's rephrasing, "which is a week on Wednesday," could be read as quite neutral by virtue of it being non evaluative and a non topic item; yet I read it as eliciting agreement. It lets DB know that they have arrived at some kind of an understanding as to when the plan of the work is to be completed by.

The extract reveals how the managers make quite explicit the state of their work and what they should do. What one has a sense of on hearing it is an uncertainty as to where to go next. Moving off a topic necessitates that another topic is available. Line 15 "I think we've probably done enough on EIP as we've been talking," is hearable as a form of candidate closing, an attempt to move off the topic and switch to a new issue. The "I think" marks a request for agreement rather than an assertion of a topic. It marks the suggestion as a possible version of organising the events, recognising that DB may not agree to close the topic, admitting the possibility that there may be room for different views. It recognises that the organisation of this meeting is a collaborative affair; moving forward is something for both parties to agree.

The closing of the summary of what they both want out of the meeting is almost achieved by lines 12 and 13, that DB accepts this as so may be exhibited by the fact that he does not to take up his turn, and the long pause that ensues. DW clarifies the position they are at after this pause, line 15. It seems that he wants DB to vocalise his agreement more emphatically than the "yeah" of line 16, shown by the request for a response over lines 15-18, "we've been talking through that haven't we?" The sentence, recognisable as a statement in its use of a question like format marks the closing of the topic, work on EIP, as a matter for explicit agreement from DB, or at least response.

In lines 18-23, DW takes DB's token of agreement as a warrant for proceeding from closing the topic of EIP to call attention to the BM agenda. What is interesting is that such explicit mutual collaboration is required for the managers to move on in the talk. It might be that such agreement is necessary to achieve some wider organisation to the work patterns of two managers whose relationship is indirect and periodic. The accomplishment of a shared vision of each other's expectations allows the managers to carry each other along in the course of the meeting. Thus we find that the achievement of an organisation to the work is collaborative, subject to negotiation, compromise and improvisation.

The extract reveals the delicate repair systems which exist to enable two managers to develop a shared understanding of their work commitments to one another. DW gives DB the 'floor,' "is there anything I'n LBM agenda that you particularly want ?....just have a look", line 18-19, interrupting DB to give an instruction to look. This direction seems to put a requirement for more detailed attention, but not we learn from line 23 here on this occasion. It is possible to find line 18 to be "shutting down" the topic (Button 1991b) by identifying the next activity appropriate to that topic as one outside of this occasion. DB's reply, line 20 would seem to indicate an attempt to begin a reply; this he revises in line 22 by an accepting "okay". DW it seems is directing the meeting, not just it's topic but the manner of its accomplishment.

DB takes up the pause that ensues and over lines 25-37 provides a telling of what work his Business Centre is involved with. In replying to DW's identifier, "you," with an account on behalf of his Business Centre DB reveals that he has understood the recipient design of DW's line 18. The "you" refers to DB as representative of the Logistics Business Centre.

The telling is interesting in a number of ways which I will go on to reveal. However, here I wish to point to the partitioning achieved in the talk of DB by his use of "I" and "we". It seems "I" is referenced when he is organising interactionally this occasion of talk and "we" is invoked when DB is referring to work to be organised outside of this meeting. The "we" may involve a reference, to his department with himself able to act in the

capacity of an agent of the department, as in line 26 and 29. The "you-we," lines 25, 26, 31 and 33 also appears to do partitioning work. It captures the partitioning of DB and DW's work, characterised elsewhere by DB as "customer-supplier"

A need for agreement as to the future work: collaborative plans.

For the managers "what next" is a practical problem not just in terms of the sequential organisation of the talk but in a projection of their future work. Indeed considerations of the course of the work and possible courses of action are occasioned by the interactional order; if DW does not agree to DB's formulation then DB's future work plans may be jeopardised.

Could it be achieving agreement as to what they will do next is a characteristic way in which managers attend to the continuity of their work relations? Clarifying plans may be a feature of management work which makes available a legitimate sense of what each party will do in the future. This could be particularly important given that the nature of the managers' work relations means a temporal uncertainty exists as to when they will work together again; and an uncertainty as to what work will get done in between. The manager is faced with decisions of how to act in immediate circumstances where decisions made may influence the future course of the work he undertakes or receives and in ways that are as yet unknown and unforeseeable. If they must take actions that influence future work then knowing what the recipient of the work expects, what sort of consequences are anticipated, how they are received is important work.

Part of planning is about making work that is 'up and coming' persuasive enough to be accepted, about getting the other manager to "buy into" the plans. That DB wants to offer DW plans and reports is not a matter of just asserting them, it is about justifying this activity in itself, about finding a value for the documents so that DW attends to them, about interactively handling any challenges DW might raise.

The promise of "good news", a stage towards agreement

In line 25 DB formulates the reporting of his plans as the purpose of this phase of the meeting. The promise of "good news", line 25, serves to forestall the requirement to disclose detail. DB seems concerned to arouse DW's interest but he does not detail what is "good news." Whether there is an expectation that disclosure of detail is inappropriate or whether disclosure of detail is withheld for other reasons is not apparent. What is apparent is DB's concern to make clear that he is doing something.

The reference to "good results", "good news" that is "coming up" and "hope we're going to give you" is all positive but suggestive of a future not quite firmed up. Something it

seems DB himself is sensitive too, line 33. One has a sense of anticipation as to what this "good news coming up" might be which is sufficient to defer the work of laying open what has actually been done. One has a sense that DB is preempting a challenge from DW to account for his work and that he is attempting to manage it prospectively.

DB's prefatory promise of good news, lines 25 and 26 (that is prefatory to any request from DW for the good news) and its repetition is an optimistic formulation of their future working relationship and works to provide a pre-emptive move. It was hearable as a 'versed practice', skillful in that it provides for any prospectively invokable criticism from DW as to the inconsequentiality of his comments. Perhaps, too, it cleverly obtains for DB a right to speak by the positive characterisation of what could follow if he is allowed to keep the speaker turn.

Over lines 25-37 it seems there is a concern on DB's part to make visible just what the Business Centre he is managing has done, is doing, and plans to do. This announced organisation of the work appears tentative and somewhat reticent by its slow and broken delivery. No explicit response is provided by DW; instead a neutral response lines 28, 32.

DB's reference to "we" is heard as a reference to the work of the Logistic Business Centre. Linked to the activity descriptor "focusing" it establishes what kind of work activity is being done. Thus part of achieving mutual understanding for DB and DW as to what they will be doing in the future involves clarifying each other's historic and present work concerns.

DB's disclosure, I hear as doing the work of sustaining the working relationship, an attempt to raise DW's expectations. Importing some knowledge that I had of DB's work from earlier discussions with him I knew that DB has been unable to act on the project for DW's Business Centre. For DB to start work on DW's project he needed a "case tool;" yet for the reasons I referred to earlier in the chapter he had not yet received one. This leads me to hear DB as attempting to defer a request from DW for details of the work. DB is relying on DW accepting his assurance of information in the future and that this will in his own words "buy him time to get the case tool signed off."

There is a 'prospectively-orientated vagueness' engendered in the procedural reference: "we're focusing", "we've mapped out." In their use DB provides for the relevance of "filling in" activities of a retrospective-prospective kind; that is to say, the use of these pro-terms occasions 'consultative work', 'inspections', or 'operations.' The "try" does however introduce the prospect of some kind of problem and the "praps a plan" makes the shape of the promised outcome uncertain. This uncertainty is mirrored by a failure to characterise when he will give the report, thus avoiding detailing the exact time of

delivery. It is further indicated by same speaker modifications which reformulate his prior assertions without necessarily retracing the characterisation.

DB's formulation of his proposed future statement of progress changes with a sensitivity, perhaps to DW's lack of response, and of a need to upgrade the original offering. DW's responses; the "mhm" of lines 24, 28, 32 as continuers or acknowledging tokens are minimal. The responses receive DB's talk as in some way "informative" while by the neutrality of their intonation not quite suggesting that this information is "news." The responses minimal alignment require DB to retain the turn to talk and offer opportunities for further elaboration from DB by passing over the right to speak. DW accepts receipt of the information but does not affiliate or disaffiliate with it. This neutral stance, I would suggest, creates pressure for DB revealed in the careful formulation of lines 25-37. Although DB does not detail the work, he characterises the objectives, and by such characterisations as "focus", "plan", "mapped out" is able to provide a sense of the work as detailed and thought out, where that sense adds to the portrayal of the work as organised, planned (even if incomplete). There is an interesting asymmetry in that it is DB's planned work that is under discussion not DW's and it suggests a reporting relationship where DB is making accountable to DW his planned next stage.

Offering a planned next stage

Lines 25-37 are interesting for their repetitive patterns. Firstly DB seems to display a sensitivity to the construction of his talk and the sense that DW may take by the repeating of some of his lines; "we've got. got some, we've got some", "we're focusing we're focusing". Secondly there seems to be an element of repetition by what appears to be similar descriptions of the work, thus the words "focus", "bite on", "mapped out", "plan" are all similarly concerned with the position of the work, its objectivity. They are all suggestive of achieving clarity. This repetitive feel to the lines suggests DB's sensitivity to formulation of the account. The hesitancy of delivery and his self corrections, "I hope" "and try" and "praps a plan" points to this being a delicate matter. Finally this concern with formulation is made explicit later in such lines as "It's saying", "It's things like", "it's stuff like that" and the detailing of what it consists (lines 46-65).

Line 29, the self corrected "but I, but I haveen' I haven' got" seems to indicate DB's sensitivity to how his work appears. DB retracts this negative position statement reformulating it in the present tense, "we're focusing". This is suggestive of directed activity, of a current state of work. "Up to today" confirms the status of the work as current. It establishes a contemporaneity of the moment in the conversation, links the way the work is to the point in the meeting. What DB is planning to do is produced as though its temporality were interior to the "objective events" being analysed in and through the talk. DW reveals a sensitivity to the changes that the meeting can create. It seems to

recognise a legitimate right for DW to pass judgement as to what is an appropriate set of activities to be involved with. Line 31 seems concerned to give recognition to what the end result of this 'focus' will be.

DB's referral to giving DW "something to bite on," line 33, by its association recognises a need for DW to have firm data. It seems to confirm a hearing of DB as sensitive to the need to achieve what he referred to outside the meeting as "delivery of something tangible to DW" but which he said was "not going to be easy." Line 33 is idiomatic and perhaps through this inherits a versed quality. It proves however to be impoverished. The line promises something tangible but we learn in subsequent lines that DB does not, in the occasion of this meeting produce it.

In the extract we find the adequacy of DB's explanation as demonstrating his present and future work is a matter for the parties' concern. One has a sense that DB is almost constructing his own integrity.

The conversation provides evidence for some of the ways the design of shared work was achieved as an in course accomplishment of the interacting managers. The local work of agreement is thus significant to justifying the work "done" so far and shaping the subsequent course of the project.

We find that the parties 'talk' is concerned with prospective happenings, DB tells DW both what he is doing currently but also what he is planning to do. We find the extract to be about approving plans. Lines 33-38, "reporting and mapping out" as depicted activities are themselves suggestive of further activities by their signification; as activities outlining future states of affairs. It brings conversational attention to the presence of future results, yet does not allow DW as recipient to gain access to the detail of the work.

Agreeing on how to identify / recognise the work

Line 38 is a factual request from DW, "What would you call that?" interpretable retrospectively as an attempt to get DB to provide an "identifier", a categorisation of what he is promising. The request, by its nature as an interruption seems to suggest a concern for an alternative identifier. It curtails DB's talk, cuts him off, moving the talk along. Given that DB and DW are busy people, with restricted time and a number of topics to discuss moving talk along moves the work on. The interruption and questioning indicates an interactional dominance by DW revealed again in later lines 45, 72 and 78. This dominance is found to be an achievement in the talk, rather than an externally imposed authority; it is found to exist in the relationship between the parties.

DB's reply is not directly aligned to the question; he does not proffer a name; instead he presents the process by which he will work with DW, projected as a possibility. The propositional format, "Well, what I was gonna do", "I was gonna show you" marks the occurrence as a contending possibility, a likely future action. This projection of a possible future action shows how interactively sensitive the nature of the working relationship is. Whether DW sees the document, a summary of it or just its name is decided by the parties. Whichever it is, it is required to check whether the "customer/ suppliers" (as DB and DW saw themselves) view of the work is the same.

DB's proposition, "well I was gonna show," line 39, marks the physical presentation of the explanatory document as a contending possibility and an alternative to the activity of 'naming'.

It suggests DB's preferred way of working on this occasion is not "doing naming" but "doing inspection". The turn position maker "well" displays an orientation to the known in advance character of the utterance, it sets DB's initiation up as if it were scheduled; marked as an already planned event.

Attention to the interactional detail shows how sensitive to collaboration between the parties their work is. Thus even how DB and DW expect to exchange details of what the plans will look like is open to negotiation. Line 39-40 "a quick two page document" reveals DB's sensitivity to pressures of time on DW; an awareness of needs for speed and brevity in interaction. DW's "hmm" of line 41 provides an indication that he acknowledges DB's proposal for him to see the document. As a neutral & minimal response it extends DB's turn. DW's response, line 43, "Can you leave it with me?" implies that exploring the detail is not appropriate to the specifics of this meeting (a point which resurfaces line 77). Here presenting detail is not considered part of the work of this meeting. This proposed stage of the meeting, the "quick look" phase is removed interactionally, as is the requirement upon him, DW, to offer agreement to the proposal 'here and now'. Line 43 DW assumes he can retain the document, he assumes it is in existence, DB's reply line 44 shows explicitly a sensitivity to this.

DB seeks to clarify DW's assumption that the document is immediately available, line 44. This appears problematic for DB by his restarts and stutters. DB's "I haven't" reformulated as "I will give it to you" reveals a concern for presenting the current state of his work for DW in a positive manner. This provides a more positive characterisation of the position, one senses that not having a document available is not good management practice. DB rephrases "I hav'n" to "I will have it next week," and by proffering a date adds to the certainty of the document being available to DW.

The problem of naming the planned work

In the data we can detect a concern on DW's part for a name for the planned future work. This creates a difficulty between DB and DW over just what name is appropriate for the work, a problem that begins line 25 and resurfaces line 45. How this is managed struck me as particularly interesting for the interactional difficulties hamper the very activity the managers claim to be here to do; agreeing future plans. The managers appear 'practically constrained' in their work by their verbal competencies and conversational practices. These ordinary competencies are bound up with achieving the work of getting plans accepted and organising future activities.

On hearing the managers talk I wondered why identifying the document by name was so important for DW. The data reveals the practice of "doing labelling" something like a classificatory exercise as in the sense of the pulsar and the scientist¹⁵ or axon sprouting and the neuroscientist¹⁶ and one senses that a recognisability is afforded to the planned work by the finding of an appropriate name.

In line 45 DW repeats his request for a name for the proposed work plan and begins the reply on DB's behalf. This acts to make a reply compulsory by asserting a possible label for the report proffered as preemptive of DB's response. Unless DB wants to accept that characterisation he is compelled to offer some alternative. This is a nice illustration of how powerful conversational devices can be as resources for a manager to achieve a particular outcome.

DW in fact proffers a suggested name "Work plan almost" to which DB replies "it's really our strategy" this is initially accepted, but the name no longer fits when the time period that the report spans is raised as 15 months, line 52. The managers make the distinction that the term "strategy" must relate to a 12 month period only. In lines 50-52 there is a sense of a timetable for the work, of the temporal nature of the plans being significant to its identification. It becomes apparent over the next 20 or so lines that the problem of labeling the work is clearly not easily resolvable. Why the name is so critical to DW is not made explicit by the managers. It could be in order to categorise exactly what DB is promising so that the details of the work plans are clarified and the final appearance of these plans can be held to account, or it may purely be in order to give the document a name in the agenda of the forthcoming meeting.

It seems reasonable, given the seriousness of the parties interactional work over lines 45-64, to suggest that the parties' agreement here had wider implications than just this occasion of interaction. Could it be that the parties are held to such agreed-to matters, expected to deliver just that which was agreed to? That a name for the work gives a recognisability to the work not in the sense of a classificatory activity but as standing on

behalf of certain details that DB must accomplish in the up and coming business. Given the managers' own concern for the properties and activities conventionally associated with the particular category/ name selected this might be a reasonable inference, but remains nonetheless an inference.

What is more certain is that over lines 45-64 the managers are discussing what DB's future work will be, where the issue for the two managers is, that they must work up a collaborative agreement as to what it consists of. However, how they choose to do this is found to be different, DW chooses to characterise it by name and DB by an explanation of the detail.

The data suggests that DW and DB seeking to accomplish the naming of the document have a number of descriptors available; portfolio, business plan, quality plan; but that the "naming" is problematic. Here we sense any one of the descriptors invoked by the parties is potentially correct. What is important is what is appropriate on this particular occasion. This is interesting analytically, in that the managers' attention to how they assign names seems to reveal not only a set of institutional categories for describing the work but also something of the rules of application, what Jayyusi (1991 pg 237) refers to as

"the in situ intelligibility of particular descriptions as produced within the course of practical action."

That is to say it could reveal what for the managers were the features that they held to as significant. For example we find from lines 48-51 that a dimension differentiating "strategy" from being a "business plan" is the time scale.

The naming is handled in a manner which is almost a process of elimination; "It's not the", "It's almost" and in a manner by which the parties almost seem to make explicit their thought processes. Such a pattern of interaction seems to deflect any explicit disagreement. "It's almost" line 55 reformulates a prior assertion without retracting it, it admits exceptions/differences thus weakening the earlier "it's your work plan" as a possible candidate answer. The managers by this process of elimination make explicit the potential candidate names and work towards an understanding of what the document will be as a collaborative understanding. By making explicit the excluded names they are doing the activity of checking and demonstrating. By making explicit reference to what it is not the managers defer any judgement of their inability to locate the work. It is not that they cannot name the work but that the correct name cannot be found.

Over lines 48-72 DB & DW are doing "correction". Assertions are made and subsequently modified in such a way as to indicate that this was "qualified talk." In the course of the business of correcting we can find such attendant activities as "admitting"; line 54, "I don't now what to call it anyway" and "disclosing"; line 52, "we've got focus". The activity affords an insight for the managers as well as for the analyst as to just what

the work looks like. If a name is found it will be collaboratively achieved; it is not automatic whether a potential name is correct, it is to be worked out between DB & DW, step by step and on this occasion. Whether a correction will be accepted or rejected is a matter of collaboration. The frequent employment of "it's almost", "some of those things" softens the corrections and ensures ongoingness by encouraging amendments. These asides serve to make disagreement as weak as possible by admitting to the characterisation as approximate, thus opening the possibility for debate that they are not 'adequate'.

Interestingly debate does not ensue but instead alternative names are offered. Line 60 "it's almost LBC business plan really isn't it?" could be heard as allowing for compromise, whilst by its questioning intonation it places the onus on DB to respond. DB qualifies his agreement by "well it will fit within the business plan." This displays DW's account as plausible but not sufficient to agree a name.

Of interest is the use of proterms which could be seen as eliciting agreement prior to the correction. The "yeah", a typical agreeing object in this instance seems a device addressed to the ongoingness of the discussion and to the concern for managing favourable relations between the two managers, much less an expression of agreement.

For DB the name cannot be approximate but must accurately stand to explicate all the detail of the planned work. Thus DB moves on to present a different account of what his work will be. Line 62, "its what we're gonna do, when" seems occasioned by the difficulty of naming. In the attempted resolution of the problem of naming the nature of the document is revealed.

In line 71-72, DB tries to treat his account of some contents of the report as a resource to move the discussion on, recycling line 39, but his attempt to resolve the problem of naming by an alternative is rejected. In lines 73 & 75 DW interrupts DB and makes explicit that detail (or having "a quick look") is not sufficient to communicate to him a name. This might be seen as achieving a redefinition of the situation. The extract is interesting for explication of the document is not adequate for DW and one is left wondering why giving the document a name is so significant. Does it effectively and perhaps artfully allow DW to avoid accepting the plan and simultaneously to achieve a closing?

Line 73 is a closing by nature of it being a statement bereft of topic continuation or initiation features in a turn subsequent to a topic bounding. It removes the issue to a subsequent future occasion. Line 75, "time scales for everything" by virtue of its unilateral assertion is not easy to make sense of, however it seems to make explicit, to reintroduce one requirement of their meeting, that is a sensitivity to time and to "close

off' any further discussion of the topic. It seems to attend to the overall management of this occasion of talk. It conveys a sense of urgency or impatience. An ambiguity in meaning for me makes it difficult to be sure if the cause of DB's subsequent silence is a hearing of DW's comment as a rebuke or perhaps a recognition of DW's control of the shape of the meeting. DB's orientation to the closing is minimal "yeah alright", "right"; it merely elicits acceptance not agreement, yet is sufficient to achieve movement out of the closing.

An occasion for laughter

I frequently observed occasions in the managers work where humour appeared to play a part.¹⁷ Indeed on this occasion we find laughter.

The laughter in the course of the ongoing talk of the meeting is methodologically difficult to manage, both hard to transcribe and to make interactional sense of. These difficulties are further exaggerated given that humour can be employed to convey veiled messages and to perform serious tasks, Mulkay, Clark & Pinch (1989).

A ubiquitous feature of laughter is its "recipient design" and it is this that makes it difficult for me as analyst to handle. What may on the surface seem an innocuous comment may on closer inspection reveal a double edged comment. I heard the laughter as deliberate, rather unnatural given the absence of humour in earlier lines, almost performed as a way to arrive at some specifiable outcome. It seems not only relevant, to the tone of the response in lines 73 and 75 but as having a significant bearing on a next action, the reproach of line 77. The laughter may be seen as introduced to manage the interactional sequence in which some improper talk goes on. Thus the curtness of the closing, line 73, may seem too frank a rejection of DB's plan. Such talk as line 73 can be seen as a display that DW takes it that he has a right to overthrow DB's suggestions in the current interaction. Further, it may be that by such talk DW may be trying to alter the interactional pattern in that he is trying to speed up the topic discussions. The laughter, at first initiated by DW is shared (in part) by DB. Though DB's response was hearable as a token acknowledgement, listening to it, it sounds constrained and occasioned, almost cautious; a laugh specifically deployed for interactional reasons. Given that DW follows this in a mildly reproachful manner, line 76, which DB accepts, this is a feasible hearing.

The occasion of laughing together might serve to indicate an environment in which the relationship between DB and DW is sufficiently light-hearted,¹⁸ yet allows DW to put the meeting back on a course he desires and to allow a critical characterisation of DB to be made under the mask of an affable relationship. His characterisation of DB needing to "do better than that" selects for assessment DB's action and evaluates it as unacceptable. In a sense it exploits the collaborative work of shared laughter.

Closing the topic

Line 79 is the first part of a sequence designed to generate a new topic although it appears within the closing section of the previous topic. It is interesting because it sets up a right for DB to speak, well placed after his silence. However, by its "can you let me know" it locates the response as outside of this occasion of meeting. Line 79 therefore organises the next move of the meeting but does not present a specific item or items for the next speaker to talk about. It re-organises the work so that a reporting of the news is not relevant at this moment, in this meeting. This is made quite explicit by the offering of a date for its reporting, line 80. It recognises the gap that exists between now and their next contact or next meeting.

In line 82, DB's "yes" is noncommittal as to what action he will take, it is purely a reply to a request; neither a denial nor a take up. Thus it provides for DW's next turn to be occupied with material to direct the meeting. This makes closing again relevant and a minimal movement takes place. DW, line 83, seems to recognise this stoic attitude for he seems to make the closing relevant again by repetition, "midweek yep". DW in effect "recycles" the closure and this provides a further opportunity to present a new topic. Perhaps he softens the brusqueness of his closings, lines 77 and 79, by lengthening the turn. It gives the turn to DB but in a manner which does not allow him the opportunity to move out of the closing. It remains relevant to the ongoing work at hand.

The shuffling of papers and silence exhibits a search possibly for the appropriate next topic. It sets an arena for the conversation to continue in, it sets up the future concerns of their talk. But by its incompleteness it requires some reaction by DB for it leaves open the exact nature of the interaction within the arena of the topic of "Tams replacement" to be solved by the parties. It requires DB to continue some form of topic production activity. This could be a pivotal point for the conversations continuation or the conversations closure.

Given that the managers had specific agendas, a number of topics to discuss, this seems to indicate that a considerable amount of conversational / interactional competence is needed to ensure that the managers can achieve this series of conversation. The delicate handling of topic termination is significant to how DB and DW will leave the subject to which they must return, and the relationship between them. How speakers leave one another may have implications for their further interactions and indeed may even bear upon the initiation, or immediacy of a next contact.

Features of the meeting: Planning, Organising and Naming

Following the line by line analysis of the extract, I consider it useful to offer a summary account of features of the talk. It reflects an attempt to isolate and to focus upon a number of features of the extract that I identify as consequential to the work being done here; planning, organising and naming. I would stress however that this isolation of discrete activities is an analytical exercise, to identify exact points of transition between planning and organising does not prove possible in the analysis. The activities are not engaged in as discrete activities. What we find is that they are entwined. Organisation of the detail puts the parties in the position where agreement as to future plans can be reached, but not it seems until the activity "doing naming" is achieved.

Doing Planning

In the extract we find DW and DB addressing a number of present situations whose future states are vague, even unclear. In this extract the concern is with what Garfinkel calls the "operational future." That is a concern on DB and DW's part for how they organise and characterise the work both know they want to do in the future. Though the managers know that they each have preferences as to how they would like the plans to unfold, and a sense of how they think the other will respond ; what actually results is only known by, as DB put it, "Waiting to see what we get out of the meeting."

It appears that it is not just a plan of work that must be discovered and agreed in and through the meeting; the meeting is also concerned with the recognisability of these plans and how they are understood as possibly implicating their future relations and their future work outside of this meeting. Only in the course of the meeting, as a result of making recognisable the planned work and the need to organise the work with DW does the nature of DW and DB's future states of affairs become clarified.

Analysis reveals other activities of interest such as "naming", "agreeing", "modifying." The struggle to analytically handle and delineate these phenomena left me of the opinion that these phenomena are not apprehended as independent from one another. In this instance it seems that "naming" afforded the managers a visibility to future work. It could be suggested that agreeing 'a name' plays an important part in this occasion of planning in terms of the recognisability it affords to an as yet "unknown" future state of affairs.

Doing Naming - A part of planning?

In exploring the transcript the concern that DB and DW have with naming the plans becomes apparent; but what is the involvement of naming in the collaborative work of the meeting? Were they devices the managers employ in an attempt to exercise control over

the definition of their work, or sense making devices? Was it part of the accountability of the plans for future work activity, directed to achieving over the course of the interaction an organisation for the future work that they as individuals prefer? Was it that agreement of a named future course of work was the agreement of plans?

It seemed to me that where the work between managers from different departments is collaborative, tying someone to a set of plans could afford a solution to the problem of identifying just what will be done. By the attempted assigning of a name to the future plans for work DW demonstrates a knowledge of the kind of work DB will do in his reporting. By giving the plan a name it could be that DW can rely on its particular sense in the common culture of management and thus be assured that DB has committed himself to deliver certain details. Naming was a way in which the preferred states of the work were given a visibility. In this situation it seemed that naming became synonymous with collaboration on the "details" or "procedure" of up and coming work, the naming thus standing for how the plan will come to be played out. It has the potential to assign a retrospective sense to the plans making them less contending possibilities, more certain. Through the managers' concern to name the work, particularly DW's one almost has a feeling that the naming was a way for the managers to reach a mutually collaborative understanding of their relationship to one another and future work. Work which by its very nature as plans was only a projected sense of events, could have substance and order if the managers agreed to a particular 'descriptor' that was recognisable by the "members" as consisting of certain actions.

Here it seems the difficulty in naming means the plans will not have been agreed, because just what they consist in has not been agreed. In that this occasion of 'naming' proves a trouble for the parties it leads us to find that the activity "naming" is not unproblematically available. In this instance we find extended description employed as a device to manage the trouble. This serves to open up something of what the managers are trying to name. Thus we learn it will include such details as "when all the projects have quality plans signed off, when all the BP4's have KRA's, recruitment action plans." In opening up what they understand by these descriptors DB and DW are also revealing to us as analysts something of their sense making. This provides a potential resource for the categorisation of the managers' activities and experience, offering insights into a 'practical vocabulary' that the managers themselves used.

In the process of "naming" the interactional work displays and becomes significant as putting requirements on DB to furnish particulars of this work. The naming process shows those activities appropriate to managers "doing mapping out a focus for a business centre." It is an example of the members' practical reasoning; that is the way in which members themselves structure and make sense of the world in which they live. The managers by changing the names, trying new ones are trying to use what is known about

the particular descriptors in order to correctly account for what the prospective plan will be. All the names for DB's work are offered by DW without having actually seen or heard any more about the document involved than lines 33-37 and lines 39-40. In other words, one of the things that DW as a member can do is fill in the meaning of the names. The managers seemed to have some definitions they were working to, some relied upon 'labels' in the world of management. Relied upon in the sense that these meanings were available and known to the recipient.

Given the work I undertake in Part 2 this noticing provides support for my hunch that certain categorisations could have a trans-situational, stable and enduring core of meaning, possibly stable enough to allow some transfer of meaning between situations regardless of context. There is a sense that for the managers what is known about/ meant by the category will be "understood" by other members.

We see the managers have a concern with "ruling in/ ruling out work", what work is entitled to belong to a particular category ¹⁹or name being invoked and what is not. It appears that there is something "fixed" about these categories, they are held too definitions, that strategy might be 15 months is not subject to modification. The managers do not attempt to change the definitions. Thus we find the managers invoke as "focus for the business centre" categories which include "work plan", "strategy", but do not include the "budget", "business plan", "portfolio." From the managers' behaviour a single category from the device ie one name would make adequate reference to the object for them to make sense without the need for further categorisations or further descriptions. This Sacks refers to as "the economy rule " which holds simply that a single category from any device can be referentially adequate. Why then, one might ask, is this 'labelling work' made public? Why is it such a serious business? Why can't DB and DW just accept any name? Is it reflecting an argumentative, non-cooperative or a distrustful exchange?

The "naming" may be selectively and strategically invoked at this particular time as an interactional device for DW to secure his preferred outcome from DB. If he can get a particular name accepted he can "tie" DB to deliver certain things. Although I recognise this is an inference, it is one that would account for DB's resistance to accept just any old name. It seems the names may be used to occasion quite different attributes, and specific activities. In that the naming concerns plans for further work the correct ascription of a name is significant to the organising of future work.

We learn from Atkinson and Drew (1979) that this is a careful practice.

"If a speaker is to describe a scene so as to enable co-participants to recognise a particular import or "sense" of the scenes he is describing the selection of categories from the alternatives available cannot be an arbitrary (subjective individual) matter." pg 132

Had it been accomplished the naming would have become objectified in the managers' world. The naming could furnish DW with something to put a "handle" on what DB has promised and reveal the complex of details to those in the know.

It seemed that perhaps in the process of planning as a management activity the naming of the plan in the episodic nature of things was a method by which managers actually established details. The naming is not regarded by members as an imperfect, poor substitute, rather it is for the managers a preferred way to resolve the contingency of meaning, a means in which shared assumptions and understandings can be developed to make easy the structuring of everyday life. The naming is done not for its own sake but to manage the practical circumstances of the meeting, to give objectivity to issues under discussion, to enable the managers to move on having attained a shared understanding and agreed positions for the future. That the naming becomes problematic in this instance reveals how significant agreement is to plans, to the meeting moving on in terms of topics.

In summary there are a number of observations that can be made about the practices of naming we see accomplished here. Included among these observations are, first the way it is itself a practical accomplishment, secondly the way naming offers description adequate for the practical purposes of the meeting, third it raises the question, is this revealing of typical definitions, vocabularies which could be employed by managers as descriptors of their work in some wider transsituational context? Finally 'doing naming' is found on this occasion to be a significant part of the accomplishment of an agreed to set of plans.

Doing Organising

The tendency inherent in management theories interested in the organisation of managerial work would be to say that one should look at the way the managers work from a "goal agenda", this being a set of desired future states that they are trying to move towards. We learn that

"they have only tentative plans about how to get to these states, that progress towards such goals is often slow, that managers require reciprocity to advance their work agendas" Kotter 1982 pg 76

But how these agendas are attended to, is not answered. The tendency is to gloss over how an organisation is accomplished, how these activities are played out in a specific interactive situation.

The agendas, in the form of a list of points that the managers brought to the meeting set up a possible organisation.²⁰ The managers agendas for this particular meeting were individual lists and were not circulated, in the actual circumstances of this particular meeting we find they are not relied upon by the parties, at best serving as rough guides to

the next topic. It is much more through the talk that DB and DW figure-out what they are there for than from any detail on paper. Visible in the course of the meeting are practices to determine what and how moves will be made, or can be made to change topics, reach agreements etc. The actual agenda appears to be worked up and modified in the process of the meeting, one can find the actual organisation of the work to be a much more fine grained accomplishment.

The organisation²¹ that appears in the meeting is asserted within the interaction. Assertions of organisation seem independent of whether or not parties "really will carry it through." Whether such agreed to matters reflect an understanding between the managers as to how their future work will be conducted is not ascertained, however my period of observation gave me reason to believe that agreed to organisations of work are held to in some circumstances; since records and plans are created in the course of projects, documents identifying an agreed to set of actions are circulated, deadlines are established and dates written into diaries.

The achieved organisations are however factual in that they are displayed interactionally. What is an interesting discovery is that the achievement of agreement is found to be integral to moving on in the plans. Thus DB and DW must agree as to how they organise their work, agree as to what are important topics to cover here, agree to move on to a new topic, agree to defer some issues, agree the characterisation of future work etc.

Achieving mutually agreed understandings or interpretations of the situation are critical to deciding how to set up "what to do next." Part of the work for the managers is checking that their understandings of the situation agree, to move on prematurely may be found to be rude or even risky, jeopardising future plans of work that require collaboration.

Projects which seemed important for one manager but did not meet the same interest by the other manager had to be handled ie discarded or dealt with quickly. So for example, while both DW and DB, are interested in DB's work plans DW has expectations of using the meeting for things other than just this. We see him in lines 38, 46 shift the focus of the meeting to what this plan is called in an attempt to curtail the detail DB is trying to offer him, to a request to be given the document to examine outside of the meeting, line 44, and finally, in line 78 to a quite explicit concern for time.

The extract beautifully illustrates how tensions concerning expectations of exactly what work the meeting is set up to do must be interactively handled. So for DW there are more important uses of time than to hear details of reports which he can handle elsewhere. For him the detailing of the information is "inappropriate" in this meeting. Accordingly the

extract seemed able to display those features by which the detail of what will go on in the meeting is accomplished.

The order is not externally imposed by the importing of the agenda; it is actually negotiated in the finest detail of management talk. My interest is in the organisation of work as a local achievement²², provided via the asserted relevance of one statement or activity to another in the actual setting of its production.

Conclusion

Examination of the practical organisation, the interactional character of this occasion finds that the activities of planning and organising are, perhaps not surprisingly, accomplished through the practices of ordinary conversation. It might well be as George (1972) has said that:

"Planning, of course, is not a separate recognisable act. It is a mixed part of every managerial act or function.. It is as much a part of every managerial act as breathing is to the living human. We may of course conceptually separate planning for the purpose of theoretical discussion and analysis, but in practice neither is it a distinct entity nor is it capable of being separated."

Such an observation does not preclude one from studying the practical accomplishment of planning as an activity, it hints as we find here that other features may be discoverable, such as negotiation, decision making and disagreement.

In the extract there is a sense of the parties orientation to each other and to their work, a sense of what constructions they are trying to place upon their work. One can trace how they build up over a series of interactions a particular sense of what their future work will or will not be. We find that for the work to move on certain things must be accomplished; an agreed to starting point, a shared understanding and in this instance agreeing a name. These are matters of practical consequence. Whether the plans are accepted or modified is not governed solely by the independent character of events talked of, nor by logical structured talk. Instead plans evolve as a series of attempts at naming, a series of designations asserted and reasserted interactionally in the immediate conversational environment. These practices are ordinary language practices and appear as a consequential part of this occasion.

Planning is much more a case of discovering where 'they were at' and projecting actions from that, than it is arranging already certain future states and goals. It is found to be a fragile enterprise. 'A reciprocity of perspectives' between DB and DW seems to be required for future work plans to advance.

An important resource in agreeing these plans is found to be 'naming' them. The activity of naming reveals that matters agreed to in the exchange of talk have a local, mutually orientated to sense for the parties, that an agreed to name for a plan can be supplied with an extensive rationale. Accordingly achieving a naming of a piece of work means that a speaker need not index any further detail; a co-understanding has been achieved.

As Jayyusi (1991) suggests it is a matter of trust between DW and DB that certain orientations and tacit understandings will be mutually orientated to. As Garfinkel 1967 says

“many matters that the partners understood were understood on the basis not only of what was actually said but what was left unspoken.” pg 39

In this instance the inability to name a promised course of work, creates an issue for the parties. Though it holds the course of the work up it is insufficient to cause a breakdown in communication between the parties. The parties both know something of the future work that they want to do, they may possibly even know (given the description they proffer) what it will consist of, but in order to move on they must find an acceptable characterisation. It could be that agreeing to some kind of future development, agreeing to a plan is making visible the “phenomena,” giving it a specific identity; and part of making it visible is found on this occasion to be finding an acceptable name.

Indeed I would proffer the possibility that “doing naming” might be an important activity where parties are concerned with providing adequate description of future states of work. Assigning a name in this instance is a method for parties to orientate to facts which have yet to be determined, or ways of working that are in the course of being decided, to make 'recognisable' their future actions.

The distinction between features of managerial work such as planning as the name of activities and planning as the name for a kind of socially organised event has proved an interesting one. In the following chapter this interest is continued.

Notes

¹ The assumption here is, as Boden & Zimmerman (1991) suggest that social structure is something that participants themselves construct on the occasions of their interaction, as they suggest such an approach

“narrowly circumscribes” the very notion of social structure itself by equating it with “large scale “arrangements” pg 6

² Much of the literature on planning looks at it either as a function of management; Mintzberg (1973), Kootz & O'Donnel (1976) at the strategic level; Friend & Hickling (1989), Mintzberg & Waters (1989) or the operational level; Calingo (1989).

³ Ethnomethodology does not attend to the methodological problem of generalisability in the same manner as inductive theories. Following Sharrock & Anderson (1982) if within an instance something is ordinarily recognisable as 'normal' and 'everyday' then it is by virtue of that very recognisability generalisable. Although the chapter does not concern itself with offering a generalised account of planning as an activity it could offer a consideration of how an event such as planning might be conceived by a mode of analysis which makes visible a natural order. From the point of view of practical action the activity is irreducibly an event in a social order and could not therefore be described outside of the social order in which it is located.

“the particulars (the actions) and the pattern (the social setting/ the social order) are inextricably connected, are mutually elaborative.” Sharrock & Button (1991) pg 158.

⁴ Following the work of Sacks (1972), & Moerman (1974) I am seeing these as 'possible' labels for the event; I am not saying that they could not be correctly identified by some other label.

⁵ I wish to raise here a concern mobilised by the work of Schegloff (1991) pg 57-65. Schegloff raises the question of the proper analytic locus of some observed conversational phenomena, that is to say he questions on just what grounds social scientists interested in the social structural formulation of the context in which conversation occurs actually decide that the structure that they suggest it has is indeed its structure. The response to such a concern, whilst not explicitly addressed here because the inquiry is addressed to other matters, is not however unaddressed. Just how this is an occasion of managers meeting is continually addressed in terms of observations about the very organisation of the activity. The question, when shall we attribute some feature we have noticed about the organisation of talk to “internal,” conversation structural concerns, and when to “external,” social structural or Organisational ones is not explicitly addressed because the study of talk does not seek to be answerable to institutional and social structural problems unless it is necessary to invoke such contexts to understand the talk itself. Such an enterprise as the question suggests seems to me to be in danger of perpetuating the macro/micro divide when as Zimmerman in Watson & Seiler (1992 pg 35-52) suggests structures, systems & cultures are occasioned phenomena, which exist only in the practices of members.

⁶ See Sharrock & Anderson (1986) pg 15-18

⁷ Mintzberg (1973), Fayol (1949), Gullick (1980) amongst others.

⁸ For a particularly illuminating account of ethnomethodologies respecification of sociology and the social sciences see Button (1991) in *Ethnomethodology and the Human Sciences*, G.Button (ed), Cambridge, Chapter 2.

9 For an interesting review see Carroll & Gillen (1987)

10 It occurred to me that this might explain the conclusion drawn by researchers such as Carlson (1951), Copeman et al (1963), Horn and Lupton (1965) and Mintzberg (1973) that in reality Senior managers spend little if any time on planning.

11 Common description of a manager is of someone who

“plans, organises, co-ordinates, motivates and controls suggests a logical, ordered process where these different activities can be distinguished by the individual, or by an observer, and where the manager has time to devote to planning etc.” Stewart (1983) pg 52

12 A consideration of the way CA focuses on sequential organisation, particularly how it influences the relationship between talk and social structure is offered in Boden and Zimmerman (1991) page 9 and by Schegloff in Chapter 3.

13 Button (1987), Jefferson (1988)

14 Button (1985) The social organisation of topic closure.

15 Garfinkel, Lynch & Livingston (1981) “The work of a discovering science construed from materials from the optically discovered pulsar.” *Philosophy of the Social sciences* 11, 131-58.

16 Lynch (1985)

17 There did not appear to be a great body of literature on the use of humour in management, indeed thought I admit to a limited search the few studies that I found were principally concerned with the use of humour in sales interactions, for example Mulkay, Clark & Pinch (1989) and Wagle (1985).

18 “Laughter in pursuit of intimacy.” (1984) Jefferson, Sacks and Schegloff.

19 I was interested by the managers concern with naming which displayed a concern for what work was entitled to belong to what category. I develop this idea from the work of Sacks (1979). A question I asked myself was whether we were seeing something like Sack’s MCD here?

“A membership category device is any collection of membership categories, containing at least a category which may be applied to some population containing at least a member, so as to provide, by the use of at least a population member and a categorisation device member.” Sacks (1979)

A device is then a collection plus rules of applications ie line 51 that strategy must be 12 months.

20 This may lead us to ask: couldn’t this organisation influence the work of this occasion? Doesn’t the work of planning also comprise the transformation of proposed future activities into written reports. Wasn’t the agenda influential in determining the topics discussed in this meeting? Indeed these are important questions but my interest has not been in claiming that this occasion of planning is the only way it can happen, or the complete instance of planning. Following Heritage (1984) the practices which accomplish the social structure are endogenous to the work domain in which it occurs. The local accomplishment of planning here is the achievement of the sequential organisation of the talk that goes on and was not explicitly dictated by agenda, past agreement or whatever, though what was said and what was meant displayed a sensitivity to “institutional dimensions of context,” such as line 3 “too. to go back to your agenda.”

21 To talk of organising in this instance is to refer to the organisation of topicality in this meeting and not to some future organisation of events that might be being set up.

22 I am borrowing from Lynch’s (1985) work on achieved agreement. Lynch refers to organisation in these two senses;

(1) ethnographically local- organisation is achieved in the sense for those involved in its production. It is not available under analysis in a way that would surprise, affront, or claim to know better than the parties to the work.

(2) conversationally local- the materials of agreed organisation are displayed in the temporal adjacency of conversational utterances. That is one utterance can "address", "refer to" or otherwise make relevant a prior utterance, thus making it visible as an agreed to organisation between the parties to the interaction.

***“Mend your speech a little lest
it may mar your fortunes”***

W. Shakespeare

King Lear, Act I scene I

Chapter 4- “Where do we go next?”: Aspects of Implementing Strategic Plans.

Introduction

In this chapter I look in detail at a segment of recorded conversation taken from a transcript of a meeting which was identified by one of the participating managers as an occasion of "something like strategic planning." (appendix iv.) The particular interest in the meeting is for how on this particular occasion two senior managers manage the determination of a strategy to implement a change in Organisational structure as a socially organised, collaborative achievement. It is to continue a line of enquiry concerned with the recognisability of particular practices within the daily work of management. I do not begin the chapter seeking to test any particular hypothesis but rather to describe, discover and analyse the 'local accomplishment' of this instance of work.

On an initial reading the case I examine was exhibiting what could be seen as the activity “strategic planning” the managers being concerned with foreseeing issues concerning the effective functioning of their Organisation. While not disregarding the features which are widely discussed in the literature on strategic planning, my interest in this particular instance of work is in how the features found within make themselves visible. On initial inspection it seemed it may extend an interest in planning begun in Chapter 3 to that which might be classified as strategic. In the literature strategic planning is differentiated from other kinds of planning, but on examination it is found to be predicated on similar assumptions to the planning literature, that is in a manner which fails to attend to the interactional order.

The data lent some support for those who describe planning as an adaptive or incremental approach. On this occasion the plans did appear to evolve over time, but I’m not sure it was as Mintzberg (1989) suggests that the manager recognised the need to break the programme of change into a series of sequential decisions because of the need for feedback and timing. It appears as a much more incursive, embedded phenomena.

The dynamic and ambiguous nature of the environment I saw them operate in rendered the popular literature on strategic management hopelessly incomplete. The managers are not found to begin with the study of the values and objectives of top management, the

strengths and weaknesses of the Organisation, and the opportunities and problems facing it. Observation did not suggest that strategy making could be characterised as any kind of "grand planning." Theirs was a much more pragmatic approach. It seems dependent upon the managers local knowledge, the loose plans they have in their heads and their ability to exercise judgement etc.

I do not wish to dwell on the literature (on Organisational structure, change or planning) which might be of relevance here, for to reiterate a point raised in Chapter 3 they examine management work from positions and orientations once again too dissimilar to mine to provide a point of comparison. Much of the literature looks at senior managers as those responsible for the implementation of strategy omitting to consider how it takes place as an interactional accomplishment of management,¹ relying upon a sense of rationality underpinning the managers work.² A few consider the importance of communications to effective planning (Lipinski 1978) but communication is seen only in terms of mediums by which decisions resulting from strategic analysis can be translated into meaningful terms. The mode of analysis I adopt here does not presume that for the managers their world is rational; they must construct this, and this is empirically locatable.

The interest is not just in the recorded interaction as an example of planning, I am interested too in other managerial relevancies permeating the meeting. In this sense my interest is again with how far this data can be used to examine the face to face interaction between the managers, and to reveal something of the social structure of this instance of managerial work.

The data provides a means to investigate an occasion of a meeting between two managers, hereafter referred to as CE & HT, working within a large Financial Services Organisation and to discover the managerial relevance's permeating this meeting. It reveals something of the managers' general knowledge, and experience in the form of espoused logic's and practical maxims used as resources to evaluate their positions, to consider for example, "how plans are going", "what they are here for" and what such features of management as "matrix structure" consist in.

The chapter is offered in the following sections;

- the ethnographic setting; a brief description of the general features of this occasion.
- an overview of the general character of the extract and its relationship to the literature on management.
- a sequential examination of the talk and assembly of work that is accomplished in the meeting.

In this Chapter the focus of the enquiry includes an explication of members' preferences informing the interpretation and production of their work; a sensitivity to just what for

CE and HT it is to be working in this Organisation and of what planning for a change in Organisational structure entails. Something I found very exciting was the possibility that strategic planning, traditionally viewed as a macro phenomena, was explorable at the interactional level. Here a decision to implement a new Organisational structure based on "matrix design" had been made, but just what matrix management in fact consisted in and how it was to be implemented was something still to be worked through by the parties.

The setting.

The meeting which took place in November 1988 was one I observed and recorded as part of a randomly selected "day in the life" of a senior manager, CE. CE was the first manager I made contact with and my meeting with him came about as a consequence of a discussion about my research with a colleague who had recently joined the University from CE's Organisation. This colleague still met CE for the occasional social and on such an occasion informally mentioned my research to him. It appeared CE would be "interested" to talk to me should I want to meet with him. Contact with his secretary found her expecting my potential call and an "appointment" was arranged. The actual data examined here came from my subsequent "shadowing" of CE. It was a meeting with a colleague that took place in CE's office and was recorded on audio tape with my presence in the room as observer. During the course of the meeting I took detailed notes to supplement the recording. The two managers sat opposite each other at a long table. I sat on one side of the table apart from them; at the very end.

CE was a senior manager for a large European life assurance company, here after referred to as AB. He had been in his present position for about nine months during which time his concern has been to restructure and develop his team in order for them, as he says, "to be more autonomous of him and more aware of each other".

Just before the meeting CE told me that it was to discuss the planned implementation of a matrix management structure into the company. The role CE held in the Organisation was as a director, who as head of the Marketing Division had been implementing the change in structure within his own division. CE said that "How the change had been set up and how it was working was a concern for the wider company." It seemed the department was viewed as "a test ground" and a potential example to support implementation at a wider level. To "make the changes company wide" was the next stage and the reason for the meeting.

CE had, over the past six months, been particularly concerned with the role of the two managers who reported directly to him; establishing what areas of responsibility he wanted them to have, characterising the competencies required by the two and outlining

the way these competencies could be developed. Something of these concerns we see surface in this extract.

HT, the other party to the meeting was Head of the Senior Operating Group and a member of the directorate. An LBS graduate he works for the Chief Executive, directly responsible for strategic planning. He was currently involved, in addition to looking at how to change the companies' structure, in legal work for the companies' proposed merger with BB, another large Financial Services Organisation. HT was Secretary for the companies "Strategic Planning Group" and it is in this capacity that he meets CE. The concern of both managers is to establish a change in the companies' communication and management structure to that of matrix management and to discuss a paper that is to be written on matrix management for circulation throughout the company. This will involve looking at the way people working for CE, those dealing with Mortgage Brand management are at present coping with a change in their Organisation to that of a matrix structure. CE will act as a resource for the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) to offer "practical advice."

HT describes the change as "Organisationally one of the biggest issues the company must deal with (.) it's a direct result of the size of the company." He considers that the company "is at a size where it can no longer operate in a functional manner."

The meeting lasts for 80 minutes and it is subject to a number of interruptions, phone calls for CE in the main. Both managers know each other very well and neither have notes that they refer to nor do they take any notes. CE says he writes notes in three situations only: as evidence, to inform others, or to remind himself of further work to be done. He says the document generated will show the work they've done thus far and he does not expect to do any further work in the immediate future. He has already communicated to HT's boss a memo 26/10 (appendix v) indicating his understanding of what the matrix structure (cross functional brand management) looks like applied to the Mortgage business and of his aim, as stated to me, "to advocate a clear corporately agreed strategy and responsibilities for Organisational change."

A copy of this memo is enclosed (appendix v) for it was offered to me by CE as an 'adequate' explanation of what the meeting was concerned with³ and as revealing his position with relation to the changing management structure. It was formal documentation that CE had devised in order he said to "generate instructions about adequate role performance, to explain and philosophise." I had a sense from talking to CE, in something like his terms, that he intended the memo as "instructions", "a guide to practice", "a statement of intent" and a "rational to work from".

A further reason why I choose to include the memo is because there was for CE an interconnection between this memo and the meetings work. It was offered as a way the managers saw of making sense of their activities not just for me but for "significant others" in the company. Thus it was put to use as an account of his work, a socially constructed, cultural object. The memo had been circulated several months before the meeting as part of the formalising of the planned implementation; circulated so that certain "key people in the Organisation", and this included all the individuals named in the meeting, could see his "rationale" and his "expected end goal and could offer their contributions." It was also subsequently circulated to other senior managers and this I was told was a way of bringing the events to their attention without having to direct it specifically to them. This CE saw as important since they were "bound to be close enough to be affected by it."

I do not propose to analyse the memo here but include it since it was available for me and provided some important background information. If the memo represents what CE saw as "what has to be achieved" then the upshot of this is that it has to be achieved in a number of interactions such as this occasion.

The general character of the extract

Before I attend to the line by line detail of the episode I wish to highlight a number of the interactional features of the planned implementation that an initial reading of the transcript revealed. The work of this section, informed by Sharrock & Anderson (1987)⁴ seeks to orientate the reader to the analysis that will follow.

(1) This is not the first time that the managers have met to work on this project; they have discussed the planned change on other occasions and this is "a further move in the direction of implementing change". Though the general "moves" may have been agreed in advance, *this* next move, *this* particular part of the plans has to be worked out, here and now. Neither HT nor CE could tell in advance precisely how things would turn out.

(2) The reason for the meeting is to explore just what could be the best way forward for the planned implementation. On reading the transcript one has a sense of CE and HT's tendency to focus on issues tied to the local circumstances of the talk. For CE and HT the idea of what these changes will look like was in part represented by the memo which CE referred to as "the only fixed idea" of what the changes will look like when actually in place. CE and HT know enough of what it is they must do to move on, but they still have work to do to clarify how the change will be.

What the course of actions they are contemplating will produce remains uncertain or even unknown to them; part of their work is actually to discover collaboratively what this could be.

Even if the possible state of affairs is very clear the concern here is, as in Chapter 3, with "the-how-to-bring-it-about-from-a-here-and-now-future." It is this state which Garfinkel (1987) calls an "operational future" that is as yet unclear or unknown. What is at issue here for CE and HT is how to get the matrix structure in place.

(3) As in Chapter 3 the social organisation of the meeting is clearly entwined with the social organisation of the task of strategy identification. The accomplishments discoverable within the meeting; a clarification of what matrix structure consists in and the evolution of a planned course of action, are found to be tied closely to the social structure of the interaction; to the way interruptions are managed, agreements worked up, requests and responses handled, modifications and clarifications sought.

(4) Planning and Strategy Implementation are revealed, to borrow from Anderson, Sharrock and Hughes (1989), as "real time, real world processes." ⁴ They are inextricable from local Organisational issues that HT and CE face, such as support networks, particular personalities, that they must collaboratively attend to and work with.

CE and HT seem influenced by some clear sense of what they understand the preferred type of structure for their Organisation to consist of. This permeates their talk and influences their choice of strategies. It has the character of a held to and orientated to set of background understandings remembered and anticipated. We see CE & HT examine the relationship between structure and strategy. This they do by trading on their 'common sense knowledge', such matters as the lines of communication, terms of reference, reporting relationships etc. It is by this that a definition of the work that they must do is reached. They make observable the methods by which decisions as to what the desired Organisational structure consists in, and how it is to be put in place etc are accomplished. Within this we see something of the background expectancies that the managers rely upon, they reveal just what their understandings consist in.

(5) The managers recognise that this concern, to achieve what CE refers to as a "corporately agreed strategy to put Matrix management in place," cannot be resolved on this occasion. They know that while general plans may be decided between them, nothing will or could be finalised. They recognise that this issue will be attended to again, within the sequence of events that will achieve the plan and that each of them has other activities to work upon. They can expect only a reasonable allocation of time, effort and attention to their common concerns. As CE said to me before the meeting "I shall allow HT one

ana half hours or so, he's a busy man too and there is no benefit from spending too much time on this now 'cause we can't move forward too quickly"

(6) Both HT and CE recognise a shared interest, putting the strategy in place, but it is the search for a mutual vision that seems to characterise the whole episode. For the managers part of the business of their interaction is to formulate and agree the rationale involved in effecting a change, to make explicit those issues which they consider significant to implementation. These manifest themselves in discussions of working practices, sources of troubles and concerns for the strategic consequences of specific activities. They are dealt with by consideration of specific local details such as who is involved, what they think, when and where decisions must be made. In their knowledge of social structures, such as how meetings function, departments work together etc. It is such talk that facilitates the accomplishment of the planned change as a first stage in the implementation of it across the Organisation.

(7) We find CE and HT produce a visibly asymmetrical relationship. HT seems to exhibit an orientation to CE as expert⁵ by listening and accepting the logic's CE espoused and by various disclaimers. Such disclaimers as "I don't know" and qualifiers such as "maybe" downgrade his own view as a subjective opinion, though nonetheless an opinion. There is a further asymmetry in the interaction in that it is CE that is initiating topic, questions and conclusions, and an asymmetry of topic; it is CE's work plan and his vision that is espoused rather than HT's.

(8) Both HT & CE display their concern to find the best way for their implementation plans, there is much clarifying, explaining and investigation. They work out their different views quite amiably, even with humour, though there is a sense of a self-conscious concern particularly from HT for what they say, a concern for how things look. The managers we know have met to plan the next stage of implementation, the whole essence of the meeting is to determine what it could be, what is and is not possible. Thus we see information exchange is significant. It seems both CE and HT deliver findings, evaluations, recommendations and espouse logic's which occasion "mentionables" (Schegloff & Sacks 1973) from one another. In the conversation they find out what each knows and understands of the state of the plans and they indicate their relationship to each others views. Explanation is found to be an important part of the meetings work.

(9) Interestingly we find CE & HT work to define retrospectively the decision they have made, why their plans to change the structure at AB have been implemented in just such a way. Even why they are changing at all.

As Garfinkel (1967) notes

"the usual emphasis in studies of decision making is that people know beforehand the conditions under which they will elect any one of a set of alternative courses of action, and that they correct their previous elections on the way through the action as additional information turns up". pg 113

Perhaps we see here just such a situation where the justification for the decision to try and change the structure appears within the talk of how best to do it. The understanding as to what conditions define a correct decision is accomplishable after the decision has been made. Thus one might expect that a critical feature of the managers decision to change the structure is the task of justifying this course of action. The problem of assigning to the decision it's "legitimate history" is a real one for the managers.

Their practical enquiries, logic's and future work plans as to how to implement strategy consist, to borrow from Anderson, Hughes and Sharrock (1989) in the 'concerted work' of making evident from past events, espoused logic's, and experience, how best to act.

Sequential features of the meetings course.

In working through the transcript, in the tradition of earlier chapters I attend to those conversational practices that have a 'demonstrable relevance' to the collaborative work being performed in the meeting; the scheduling of the topics, the managing of interruptions, and where work is achieved in the managers' use of questioning, answering, disagreeing, agreeing, requesting, deferring etc.

I am concerned not to lose sight in this chapter of the fact that these 'things' we see going on are done by talk. The managers are discussing particular issues whilst simultaneously involved in "managing a meeting." They must co-ordinate the 'stepwise course' of the conversation in such a way that both can profitably work up a course of action, and retain some control over it. Just what the work is, that it is about "implementing a plan", is not presumed, it is rather something to be created and sustained here.

We see in the talk the interactional work the parties must do to agree on just what matrix management is, just what value meetings hold etc. We see the managers working their theories through, planning a campaign, getting a feel for how to do it. That this is not without disagreement could indicate their orientation to different definitions of management. It is in this chapter that my interest in "talk about management" strengthens. On hearing CE & HT talk one learns something of what they hold matrix management, management meetings etc to be about.

Getting into the business.

In first looking at the transcript I had seen the managers opening talk as of little value for it did not expose the business of "the discussion", nor relate to the plans and "policy making". Yet this opening talk was not unlike the opening talk of any other instances of managers meeting, that I had been a party to. It occurred to me that it was important, perhaps even essential to the managers settling down to the business.

We see that this settling-in talk is suppressed rapidly after a few polite, initial exchanges. It is nonetheless a preliminary to getting into the business, a lengthy introduction might not be necessary because of the relationship of the managers; they are familiar with each other and so need less time to establish a relationship.

In Chapter 3 the extract came from a few minutes into the meeting when the parties were already "getting down to the business." In this instance the extract comes from the beginning of the meeting and I find my presence as a researcher acknowledged. Initially I saw this as an irrelevance to the meeting, yet on reflection dealing with me was actually an important preliminary to settling down to the business.

Lines 1 and 3 refer to my presence as researcher, in just a few lines I am neatly included, then excluded. It is a felicitous accomplishment which allows CE and HT to move quite quickly onto the meeting's business. It establishes me as understanding the issues of the meeting by the fact that I have "seen the memo" (included as appendix v). It is informal and light hearted, suggested by CE's "probably remember it better than me". This could make light his own lack of recall of the document or point up my level of interest. Perhaps there is something here about establishing a common level of understanding prior to commencement of a meeting and of starting on a relaxed amicable footing, some pre-meeting work being done, a settling in period, prior to getting down to the business of the meeting.

The managers shift from what is conversational to the business of the meeting in just 5 lines. The reporting of my presence which could have upset the meeting and thus necessitated more explanation at some later date (either to HT or to me) is dealt with quickly.

Lines 5-14 set the scene, CE poses a question which seems to be a topic opener, a pre-enquiry or opinion query, "So how did it go with the chaps?" (The "chaps" I understood to be a number of functional managers, including CE's direct reports who were to implement the change. The details of HT's communication with them regrettably remains unavailable.) The opinion-query invites HT to display an attitude or judgement, after which we find CE provides his assessment, line 28/29. The opening is highly indexical,

almost a candidate selector, we do not get told who the chaps are, what it is they want to do etc. However, the reference enables HT to find as relevant a meeting which existed previously. The talk is designed and understood with respect to some "shared knowledge" that HT and CE orientate to concerning the event with the "chaps". It appears a request for information, informal comment on a particular encounter. Was this information exchange significant in its position, somehow linked to the official business, perhaps an occasion for the managers to spell out their evaluation of the plans at the outset?

The opening does not appear problematic, CE seems to have an established right to open the subject up. This might be established by HT, who acknowledges himself as understanding, holding himself in readiness for subsequent interaction by the "right" of lines 2 and 4. Given that some speakers have overriding speaking rights and duties, it seems that CE is given the opportunity to decide and announce the order of business, "the what exactly it is that we are talking about."

HT's tentative response; "well I think quite well" in reply to CE's question appears interactively sensitive to a possible difference in their judgements of the meeting's success. Given that he is beginning a meeting with CE, a meeting concerned with how well their plans to change the Organisational structure has gone he is sensitive to the fact that his judgement may be prospectively redefined. He is feeling his way, discovering what he can say, proceeding carefully. In Lines 6-9 ("their view..of what ..I'm trying to do and the SPG trying to do and .. your tryin to do") HT creates a feeling of there being three threads/ groups of actioning parties, a sense of who is sponsoring this activity. By line 12 these are combined to "we", the three parties hearable as together in their plans. Plans which from lines 11 and 49 we hear as plans that are getting bigger. He suggests "the chaps" view of what is going on is "evolving, as as times gone on". This is suggestive of an awareness of the planned change, but in lines 13-14 this is actually shown to create a trouble; "he's apprehensive to say the least". The broken speech of line 13 suggests HT finds communicating this deduction problematic. There is a concern in HT's speech for the deliberate and conscious articulation of how things look, which is prevalent throughout.

Testing the waters

The managers make apparent that in part, the implementation has to do with how actual people, in actual settings perceive it. Thus that a particular manager, Otto (one of CE's direct reports) is apprehensive of the change is a trouble raised in the talk. HT handles his portrayal of Otto's reaction selecting "apprehension" upgraded by the addition of "to say the least". HT thus achieves a characterisation of his own statement/ account as conservative. That HT accompanies this with a short laugh could achieve several things, firstly it could point to inappropriacy of his selection of the word "apprehensive" to

describe Otto's state and it might also act to downgrade the occasion as a problem telling. CE's reply is non committal, it leaves open the development of the conversation to HT, whilst putting himself forward as holder of the same information as HT.

HT offers an assessment of what he sees as the reason for Otto's apprehension. He presents this in the past tense. This reduces the consequentiality of the trouble by making it seem as if changes have occurred since, achieved by the phrase "initially he thought he ought". This perhaps establishes it as resolvable.

We learn that for HT and CE the plans to change to a matrix structure are about more than just communicating, "a little bit more with people across the functions." The problem of Otto's misunderstanding is located by CE as a personality characteristic, line 19-20. That it is an "enduring belief" is suggestive of a long-standing trait which is hard to change; it is, one senses, as if CE has faced it before. CE offers the alternative to Otto's belief, line 20, a wider Organisational solution of needing "some structuring behind people," a "formal", line 23, way of managing the change.

The view of an individual, "Paul" (whom I knew to be responsible for Investment Products and an influential member of the SPG) concerning the change is raised, line 24. CE suggests Paul is reasonably "professionally anti". This is interesting for one immediately hears by the choice of characterisation that for CE it is significant to make clear that Paul is not personally anti. From HT's remark, 32-34, it seems Paul has created a trouble, HT advocates an ideal time for the comments Paul is now raising, that being when the idea was first rooted which is three or four months ago. Thus we see the managers orientate to a member's theory of an appropriate time for raising misgivings/ disagreement.

The issue of how people view the plans appears important for the topic is returned to after the interruption, line 44. Over some 40 or so lines CE and HT work up an agreement on the position of the project with respect to the "chaps."

Coping with opposition

Within the transcript there is a sense that handling criticism or opposition that may jeopardise the plans is important work. We learn that opposition or resistance seems to take the form of criticism of specific details of the plan, foot dragging etc. It seems the managers must work to uncover where these criticisms are, they alert each other of potential indicators, work up ways to circumvent or manage these. The concern here appears to be for latent opposition blocking their plans. From what we know of management work the lack of overt opposition is not surprising. It seemed that overt opposition is sensitive for those engaging in it, especially when as is the case of Otto it would be in opposition to your direct managers' plans. Given that the managers work with

each other is ongoing they might need the support of those same managers or their advocates in future work situations.

For CE and HT there appears to be an issue to do with implementing the planned change which has to do with recognising who will stand and object, and this objection may be judged differently in a public arena from when it arises during a "chat".

For HT and CE keeping informed of just what undercurrents of feeling existed was not a side issue, but an integral part of the work of the meeting and the success of their plans.

Managing Interruptions

An interesting feature of the meeting is the number of interruptions. How CE deals with the telephone interruption, is worthy of comment because it is found to be a common managerial problem. Often whilst they are talking the phone will ring, someone will knock on the door. How does this get managed? I knew from earlier occasions of watching CE at work that his secretary was an "excellent gatekeeper" and that his phone would have been switched through to her. Thus when the phone rang in the middle of the meeting I suspected that it was important. CE does not immediately attend to the phone, he seems hesitant to disengage from the conversation though he does eventually. We stay in the room and CE speaks in extremely quiet tones.

What is interesting is how CE & HT manage the interruption for we find they quickly bring the meeting back on course. The early work on the sequential organisation of turn taking in conversation (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974) would see the interruption of a phone as possibly violating the normative organisation of the meeting. Did it do so here?

CE acknowledged the call as interrupting the meeting by offering an "excuse me" to HT, and following termination of the call some several minutes later, by offering a characterisation of it, line 36, "that was a merger interruption." Possibly this characterisation is designed to satisfy as an adequate explanation of what it was about. What it was about would be a probable concern for HT and by offering it CE might hope to curtail any further questioning. What is more likely is that it allows the interruption to be found as "outside of the meeting", making those present engage in seeing it as something different from the business of the meeting. It lets HT know that it is in a different frame. ⁶

CE offers his explanation with humour, I knew from earlier time in the Organisation that it was an important interruption: CE was at the centre of the companies' activities for merger, and this was the critical week where the shareholders vote would decide the

outcome. HT seems to pick up on and extend this humour by the comment, "a slight distraction" which was a deliberately incorrect reference to the centrally important matter of the merger with BB.

What follows next indicates that the interruption has indeed disturbed the business of the meeting. In line 38-9, CE makes reference to the tape recorder, and the shared humour extends the possibility of "secret messages" being on it. That HT initially takes this as serious leads to CE's need to clarify, "I was very careful". It points to the manager's recognition of confidentiality, as a practical concern of the meeting. However, much I might have felt accepted and trusted this indicated that to them I was not a "member", though I was a party to events I was not a participant. In this instance the parties manage the interruption by achieving a co-understanding as to what it was about and the implications. It is even perhaps a confirmation of something I, as outsider, was to be excluded from knowing. Whatever it concerns the interruption is quite swiftly accounted for by the parties so that the meeting can move on.

By including HT in the details of the interruption it may be that CE is ensuring the continuation of HT's involvement. He works his way back to the meeting by offering a comment to HT and therefore returning to HT his right to take up his position as speaker. Thus it is a form of repair work, an attempt to restore and sustain the desired business of the talk. HT reveals himself as preparing to interact, line 44, and he returns to the business of the meeting. The "I think" locates line 44 as a personal source rather than with something anyone might say. The sense of HT's assertion is only retrievable retrospectively, by returning to the concerns over Paul's feelings towards the plan that they were discussing prior to the interruption. HT returns to the business by characterising the reasons for his concern about Paul, and offers a justification for Paul being his focus of interest. That this is necessary may be due to the interruption which requires the parties, some 50 lines later to re-orientate to the delicacies of the business.

Where are they in the plans?

In line 47, CE makes explicit the importance of eliciting opinions from other members. We learn something here about how managers elicit these opinions, that a private visit may be necessary to get to the truth. It seems the managers hold a view that in private people are more honest (something IC talks of in Chapter 7). Line 48, HT resurfaces his view that there is an appropriate place to voice disagreement and an expectation that those with disagreement will cry out, something which he has not found to happen.

HT, lines 48-50, begins to offer a view of CE "having gone faster than the SPG in encouraging the implementation." This suggests CE is pushing change more than the senior managers group responsible for strategic planning. HT uses the concerns of "Paul"

to introduce his assessment, one senses that this for him provides support for his claim, reducing his ownership of the comment.

Quinn (1980) finds that there is logical incrementalism to the implementation of strategy, whereby top management has a clear plan and set of objectives for where the Organisation should be moving, but is unable or unwilling to impose that plan rigidly on everyone else. Moving the Organisation in the way they think it should go is then a series of nudges and shoves. Quinn sees that if a section begins to move in a direction that is consistent with the overall strategy, then top management reinforces those developments by allocation of resources or some formalisation, and the extension of the corporate plan in that direction. In this instance the position appears somewhat different. It seems that the impetus influencing top management for Organisational change, the series of pushes & shoves, is coming from a department.

Following his suggestion that CE is moving faster than the SPG HT stops, the 2 second pause is quite noticeable. One has a sense that this is an attempt at telling CE that he is going too fast; but to say that explicitly is not appropriate. CE uses the pause to espouse his approach to the planned implementation and this 'rationale' moves from the problem of the speed of the plans implementation to how he is implementing them. It seems here that CE recognises that HT is raising as a trouble the speed of the implementation and he chooses to deal with it by explanation. CE uses the analogy of playing a game to describe his activities with his direct reports, this is suggestive of a superior knowledge, an observational, testing role. It is a metaphor of actions not part of the immediate business by which CE casts himself as an activity generator, as almost having sport. It trades upon understandings of a manager's right to control his direct reports, a control he sets up as not just of what they do, but how they do it, authorised perhaps by the descriptions he offers of his direct reports, "a little bit dopey," line 54 and "boyish charms", line 94.

CE discloses his tactics with his direct reports as to "demand more of the role than I actually intend to get in the first few months simply because they were being a little bit dopey about sort of galvanising themselves at all." This displays a conscious direction, a clear idea of what his managers are about and is illustrative of the testing out of the plan that has been undertaken, in order to see how the planned implementation works in practise. CE proceeds to his view of the next stage; that he prefaces it with "I'm reasonably comfy" is a display of confidence that allows his visionary view to be disclosed. Lines 57-60 elicit support for his announcement from the fact that it is similar to something which emerged yesterday. His disclosure in point form provides a clarity and officialises it as a thought through and orderly offering. It presents CE's conceptualisation of what the first stage of implementing a matrix structure to a division would look like as something like a prescription, a preferred way of doing things. CE

makes explicit that the constraining factors for their plans; of people's "sensitivities" and their particular personalities have to be addressed.

The next portion of the transcript concerns itself with the issue of implementing the change, the style of communication that it takes. It is noticeably CE who dominates the talk, revealing his preferred ways of working and of understanding the situation.

This is how to implement the plans.

CE, lines 57-68, offers something like a vision of how to put the plan in place. CE espouses what he understands "doing implementing Matrix structure" to consist in. The espousal also resolves the "trouble" that HT raises in the form of Paul's concerns, line 70, and makes sensible CE's explanation, lines 51-61. CE makes explicit that his preference is for a way of working that is in line with Paul's concerns.

That the troubles appertaining to the plans are characterised as the "sensitivities" avoids making the issues explicit as a problem. As implementation of their plans depended on problem resolution it was important that CE re characterised the potential problem raised by HT to the lesser status of a "sensitivity".

It is a noticeable feature of the data and perhaps of management talk in general that problems are rarely formulated explicitly. Perhaps this is to do with the fact that resolution of problems is potentially more demanding, a far more fragile process than merely dealing with troubles. It may be to do with the fact that for managers any inability to resolve problems could bring into question their own effectiveness.

In lines 76-82 CE continues to espouse a vision of the change, this time the methods by which implementation may be successfully achieved. "So I've tried to say to Otto and Richard that the key things are," offers a clear vision of what should be done and it is interesting that CE offers it in a highly context sensitive manner. It appears the process of implementation is a much more located and interactive phenomena than current theory would have us believe. CE sees it as encouraging co-ordination by discussion groups, building teams, and discussing service standards with heads of services; establishing a "strong voice". The rationale serves to deflect any attention to the problems HT seems to be attempting to raise. CE aligns on the topic but not on the subject of whether there is a problem.

The conceptualisation CE offers of the managers' concerns as "with their own little bit of the world," line 77-78, is a nice reference to the fact that it is recognised that each manager has his own area of responsibility and authority. A significant feature of matrix management for CE is that a "wider concern," "care," is fostered. For the managers below

him the work is "transmitting this care", "making sure it's done". Thus its about how one passes a vision down the Organisation. One has a sense that changing Organisational structure is about changing values. CE recognises the objective and that he controls the method by which his managers achieve it. His "I'm happy to be very flexible" implies relinquishing some autonomy over the methods of implementation to his managers. For CE there is a subtlety about control, he characterises his concerns for the amount of co-ordinating activities his direct reports do as "playing a game" which suggests a detached light-hearted management. This allows him to relinquish control over the "format" by which they enact it. It seems part of the work of implementation for CE is the education of his direct reports as to what matrix management consists in. CE, line 84, rounds up his exposition by emphasising the need to "back it up," suggestive of a supportive environment for the change, this we learn is an appropriate "climate of understanding" in the Organisation.

The reference to "the climate of understanding of what's going on, at the SPG level" is addressing the need for the top level of the Organisation, which officially involves itself with strategic planning to be aware of the change.

In this extract detailed attention to the members' formulation reveals, for a particular instance something of the situational concerns that must be resolved if the Organisational climate is to be changed. CE makes explicit his understanding of what "changing the climate" involves. There is something for CE in implementing, of ensuring that people see what's going on. For CE and HT a lack of support is related to a lack of understanding.

Explanations of the work appear as part of the managers' work itself, not a "tour" for the sake of an organised "show and tell session" but as a device to manage the local interactive climate. CE is using it to avoid having to explicitly address a number of problems HT confronts him with and which if not resolved could have the consequence of jeopardising the plans. Part of keeping the plans alive is for CE to clarify his position, to share his vision.⁷

What is apparent from the detail of the interaction, and CE makes it explicit, is that the planned implementation is reliant upon "authorities" and that these rely on concrete "incidence," the specifics of the event. The uncertainty is at the level of individuals, what their "personal view" is. "So you can't be sure you get the right outcome," line 101 recognises the element of risk; but the solution comes in "establishing the principle." There is an acceptance that a formal prescription obliges people to adhere to "authorities." What we see CE offer is his prescription, his view of how he can make this plan happen. It involves what he would like the two managers effecting the change to do. He works his strategy through, plans a campaign. In doing so it reveals some held-to

rationales/ assumptions. For example, line 94-101, "his boyish charms might get us so far down the road of relationships with people but one daystick at a certain pointif he hasn't cleared the sort of authorities before he gets to that position then he'll have a problem." It reveals CE's understanding that charisma, interpersonal skills are not enough, some formal structure is needed to support the change. Interestingly this is just what they are themselves having to do, to clear the authorities at the SPG. Planning is about clearing a path right to the end, making sure all potential blockages are recognised.

Managing change through direct reports

For CE there is an issue of what one expects of direct reports; on this occasion that they need some understanding of working within a matrix structure. CE makes explicit his concern that his managers are not fully aware of the influence and authority around them and that these lines are not as clear in the matrix Organisation. This is an issue for CE that he must address in the implementation of this new structure. Reading the classic texts the kind of competencies you need in a matrix Organisation are to do with charisma, influencing and negotiating skills. CE seems to be looking at Otto and Richard in something like these terms and emphasising the value of this kind of attribute, what he refers to as Otto's "boyish charm," line 94, but also noting that you need to check things through and get some clearance beforehand, you need to be working something like the political network as well as the social network; "clear the ground", as CE phrases it.

CE's understanding of matrix management involves working in a formal structural skeleton, influenced by key personalities. Authorities are established in each project. Problems of trust and confidence inevitably arise and must be dealt with by establishing the principles of the plan. For CE it means some kind of formal matrix Organisation design, where managers act as representatives from the mainstream Organisational culture.

CE suggested to me that in management practise there is "a strong tendency for things to be done the way they always had been done and this dependence upon precedent is very hard for a manager on his own to fight". For CE getting the change accepted is a case of "establishing the principle", line 103. The choice of phrase suggests a recognition of some personal/ moral code of right conduct but one that was shared by all members. This for CE is what is important and he goes on to recount the tale of how he is getting there.

It would seem that given the increase in the amount of responsibility on Otto and Richard clear guidelines for the delegation of that responsibility are necessary. The establishment of Policy provides a consistent, clear course of action. In that it is across the whole Organisation it is a system of administration that may be harder to disagree with than had it been enforced by CE as an individual manager.

CE reports back on the attitude of his direct reports to the planned change. The assessment of one of the managers as "reasonably happy" with the proviso "as long as I wasn't gonna drive him too hard down the road" is sufficient to terminate enquiries from HT as to this particular manager's position in respect to the implementation. CE offers a corresponding assessment of his other direct report, "Richard" as "more enthusiastic" this allows the managers to move on, in the absence of disagreement from HT, for it establishes that CE's direct reports are "reasonably comfy" with the planned implementation.

It seems for CE the first stage to putting the plans in place is about getting commitment from those who will implement it in his area of the Organisation. Indicating that his managers are "reasonably happy" weakens HT's concerns. We find that what could have been an occasion of CE and HT discovering that they face a problem of lack of support and a need to use the meeting to resolve the problem is interactionally managed by an appeal by CE to a rationale that exists to put the plans in place.

What is noticeable about these first 100 or so lines is HT's minimal response and his failure to self select a turn to talk. This leads us to find him in the role of recipient of CE's vision. Indeed with the exception of line 5's request from CE for an opinion from HT, CE holds the floor. CE seems to be rehearsing a rational, justifying his actions, telling HT where they are, almost offering HT assurance that all is well.

CE continues to disclose how the plan will be implemented. Line 114 introduces "another tactic" suggestive of calculative, skilful manoeuvring. The military metaphor suggests adroit consideration as to how to implement their plans. It establishes a certain credibility to CE's talk by being suggestive of purposeful procedure. The judgement of Tony as "non threatening" reveals a member's theory, that change will be perceived as potentially menacing by the "people out there." The metaphor "threatening" is suggestive of intentions to intimidate, inflict, punish or hurt. That change can be so characterised hints of its impact on the Organisation. CE's revision of "to co-ordinate", to "push this service", line 115, implies a need for stronger behaviour from his direct reports.

In line 119, by his clarificatory line, "so in the sense of getting the job done, (0.5) making the consultation happen" CE confirms my interpretation that his concern is to establish how they can implement the plan. This does the work of recognising what they have met for, that their talk is intimately connected with assessments of what "practically", "realistically" needs to be done and can be done. It places prior talk in the context of achieving this by concerns with what the position is, who to see, what resources to use and later how quickly plans should be put into place.

Thus the talk does the work of furnishing the project with managerial sense; it shows how part of planning 'a campaign' involves managers formulating accounts of how it will really, for all practical purposes, happen.

In line 120, "Tony will keep shooting" continues the military metaphor, begun in line 114, it evokes images of force, of continuous launching forward, trying to break through. As the action of a verb it is effective in giving/ stimulating the feeling of actual operation. Tony was a respected, influential manager of Personnel, involved in various divisional meetings; he was therefore in a strong position to act as a key ally to CE. It was to reveal reliance on plans being put in place by individuals selling an idea within the network. The military imagery continues, line 124, with "they've got to build the bridges" this confers an almost heroic tone to Otto's and Richard's work. They are important individuals because they are the ones setting the standards. The metaphor invokes notions of them building a structure which will enable them to communicate across different parts of the Organisation.

To summarise then this passage reveals CE's orientation to the work of putting a matrix structure in place. He appears to espouse two logic's for how to change the Organisations structure; the setting of standards, line 121, and the energising of support. At the level of implementation it is, for him, about how you make this happen, this we learn is through his managers spreading the word and clearing the authorities, getting support. He articulates a preference as to how he wants them to be working, makes an evaluation about how they have started off and where they are now.

For CE the meeting is about sharing with HT his vision of what their position is. Thus we see that a significant feature of management work is "telling-what-it-looks-like-for-me." CE's concerns are centred on how it is within his division. From what CE had said on other occasions to me it seemed that changing the Organisational structure was his "personal key to success." On arrival to his present position he had immediately reorganised the internal structure of his new division. It occurred to me that perhaps this passage was revealing his recognition that the only way to improve standards and to gain more personal impact in the company was to alter the Organisational structure so that his division could impact other functions.

Aspirations, in the form of a competitor.

In lines 126 & 128 HT attempts to deliver how he sees the implementation, CE offers minimal acknowledgement of HT's contribution despite HT's request for clarification, "haven't they?" CE clearly has a set of relevant issues and one wonders why espousing them is so important in this meeting, why HT's opinion is not attended to.

For CE the position of BC; a rival Organisation, becomes the embodiment of the vision of what they are trying to do; "they're selling exactly what happens every step of the process." CE's "I tell You" is an unqualified characterisation of what will follow. He reasserts the source of his information from "I came across" to "I was given" which has the effect of making what follows much more purposeful. CE offers a description of competitors work, a contrast from outside. On initial inspection it seems almost anecdotal and unconnected to the current concerns. The talk is difficult to follow because many of the issues it indexes are embedded in sets of shared knowledge and understandings between HT & CE. What is interesting and recoverable in the data is that CE and HT's plans are visible in the form of competitor's work; this is how they choose to conceptualise the plan. CE distinguishes excellence in a competitor, BC, they are doing things that are "nearly aspirations for us". CE reveals that for him this competitor's achievement sets a standard; "think we know what we're pitching at."

This indication of ambition seems the drive for change. Noticeably the example is local to the parties, yet it clearly relates to the accomplishment of BC's marketing department. Given my time in the Organisation I knew that a concern of CE's was that his division was only involved in the early stages of a products life; product launch and advertising. CE wants to be involved in marketing all stages of the product, to influence the process of sales and service across all functions, to influence all internal departments. This was the vision that work at BC represented.

There is an economy in description here, CE seems to use the example of a competitor as a kind of 'member's descriptor'. HT and CE seem to collaboratively agree in a felicitous overlap of turn; HT "that's totally and actually", line 146, and CE "exactly what we are trying to do," line 147.

Getting the common vision.

HT however remains concerned with the operational complexities. He does not take up CE's position statement, line 150 as a closing. He reverts to earlier concerns with how specific individuals are responding. "What about Paul's misgivings?" expresses HT's concern to establish Paul's position. For him this is significant to an evaluation of the state of implementation, and has not been adequately dealt with. Given that Paul was a director in charge of Life Assurance and Pensions and active on the SPG his support was essential to the plans working in practice. CE, whilst clarifying Paul's position, moves to re characterise the problem, line 159-60, "the problem comes really in getting the common vision." This serves to change the nature of the problem and recycles CE's earlier comments line 101.

Lines 158-175 reveal that for CE the problem of making the matrix Organisation work is not so much that if the marketing department share in project developments other departments may consider that they will interfere in the day to day operation of the projects. Instead his concern is with whether the Organisational climate is receptive to change.

CE's response works to characterise HT's concern with Paul's misgivings as simplifying what is a wider concern for implementing the change than just one manager's "misgivings." CE and HT are found to have different understandings of what is entailed in doing the developments. This difference becomes something to work out before they can move on in the meeting.

CE suggests for Paul the concern is not the approach of the Marketing department; "he's reasonably happy with the project control approach." Paul it seems would be against it if he had "no projects." The issue between the parties is not one of whether to go ahead with the change, but one senses how it's perceived; thus CE reveals a significant part of implementation is "getting a common vision." The issue for CE here is about an Organisation seeing the same. There is a distinction between a common vision and getting the work done. From line 160 one senses on the ground things get done, but CE's concern is of a different order. Their plan is not going to work if key people agree to the change but all see the change in a different light. For CE getting the common vision is difficult; it's something like getting people in the Organisation to share the same outlook.

The two managers do not perceive the problem in the same way, they have work to do to resolve these different perceptions. For CE there is a concern for the nature of the problem HT raises. He works up Paul's misgivings as things that they need to tackle. CE resolves the trouble that HT raises by re specifying it. By the manner of their reformulation within the talk CE re characterises them as part of the work of implementation. Thus they become characterised as normal, natural troubles to be expected when one is doing work such as this.

In the detail of the transcript this is accomplished by some delicate interactional work. CE begins this account with "I think put simply," this preface allows for some incompleteness in his account, makes public that he is offering a gloss. It almost works to give CE space for an extended turn. That CE suggests Paul is "reasonably happy" is interesting for he qualifies this by saying "they're not in a wretched position." This is not related to HT's question; what it seems to do is present a favourable picture before the presentation of the problem. The problem, "getting the common vision" is offered as partially resolved by the changed projection of a communication structure, "forums where people can meet". It is interesting that CE does not include getting the common vision about the development as part of "getting things done". It is somehow preliminary to all

that. The work then is "creating a climate in which people understand what's going on". This recognition of what the work is, is developed and arises in course. The concern is that people are "not told what to do". A trouble then for CE, HT and the managers is how they're to account for what the matrix structure offers. CE accomplishes this by emphasising a difference between them "supporting" and them "instructing."

CE utilises the category "standards," line 170, to offer a solution to the problem. If the standards are set by the company it can't be that CE is telling them what should be done. Introducing the notion of "standards" it becomes interactively relevant to disclose how the standards are set, line 173-175. Line 173, CE takes it for granted that company set standards will be legitimate. That they are company standards is to take the issue of control from individual departments, to remove vested interests. But he also resolves the issue of who gives the orders by placing it outside of his direct management, he does not take ownership. The argument CE has worked up to resolve HT's concern about Pauls misgivings is that it is about the vision people have of the development, not how it is done. Thus he constructs an alternative view of Pauls misgivings and does so using the very features of the matrix Organisation he wants implemented.

CE sets up an understanding that matrix management is not telling people what to do. This skilful circularity makes disagreement difficult from HT, for HT would have to redefine the understanding of what matrix management is about. CE assumes the position of a competent party to the arrangements that he seeks to give an account of, he treats actual events as indicative of the planned "developments." CE's explanation seems to be a practical inquiry into the "objective source" of the actual or potential disagreement that HT is raising. It seems he seeks to remedy disagreement by locating a basis of misunderstanding in the objects analysable characteristics. That is to say CE exhibits a means of achieving agreement from within a disagreement by formulating the disagreement as a misunderstanding.

In this instance it seems CE raises an issue about what level you look at things. The implication is that they (he & HT) are not concerned at the level of administering the day to day work, but at the strategic level. Could it be that this is an important verbal skill for management; that it is about putting problems into context and not being disabled by them? In the new matrix structure its about knowing what other departments do, about closer involvement in the developments being demanded by the customer.

Agreement⁸ as to what a Matrix structure is about.

HT appears to attempt to recycle his understanding of the situation; an attempt to establish with CE an agreed next step for their plans. The image HT offers is of face to face communication, an image enforced by its formulation as direct speech. HT's reply,

line 176, is to offer a scenario clarifying his understanding of the reporting relationship between individuals in the Matrix structure. He offers it tentatively. Indeed HT seems frequently to have difficulty articulating what he wants to say.

Interestingly CE allows HT to take an extended turn, lines 176-193. CE, line 189, by his correction of HT, albeit invited by HT's questioning suffix, "aren't you?" puts himself in the role of expert. However, HT continues to disclose his view. The concern from HT to check his understanding of the plans, lines 176-193, could be consequential to the work of the parties. Upon determination of an agreed to understanding of the details of the plans they can move on to the next step in implementation.

What strikes me about HT's vision lines is its hesitancy. Why is HT so tentative? It could in part be explained in that HT's attempt to incorporate his own vision means he puts forward a view which may be different from CE's and it is thus open to disagreement. However I hear it as a recycling of CE's earlier points. HT line 187-8, "its not an instruction; b' you're trying to influence him, to change his direction aren't you?" seems to repeat CE's characterisation of matrix Organisational structure. The clarifier, "aren't you?" suggests HT is trying to align the technicalities of his member's theory of matrix structure to the expectations he considers CE holds. We find him to be doing "checking understanding" and seeking agreement.

This is a nice example of parties to a meeting orientating to moving it along. Obtaining agreement to his version will clarify the position. What we see HT do is work up an account of how he sees the matrix structure; it seems a response to CE as a kind of reassurance achieved by virtue of the promissory nature of statements such as "so I can't ever see it being a, well I hope it never is". That it is almost clarificatory of what CE says makes it crucial to agreement. It means they don't have to revalue their relationships, HT establishes a display of agreement with CE by modifying the strength of his earlier propositions.

An asymmetry between HT and CE can be found interactionally. Frequently there are marked speech perturbations and formulations of ignorance and doubt in the talk of HT. HT orientates to CE as super ordinate which could suggest he has greater expertise, more responsibility and control? Whatever the possible reasons, and I do not explore them for my interests lie elsewhere, these differences are visible in terms of the participants' own orientations to each other in the interaction.

Line 194 CE interrupts HT, "if I could put some historical perspective on it" and forces a turn transition opening a space for further disclosure. CE does not comment on HT's proposal or even acknowledge it. Instead he offers a story-like telling, which I hear as educative. It is as if somehow by offering an account of his department's work CE not

only proposes that his plans are possible but already partly put in place, lines 235. Retrospectively it could explain his failure to align to HT's vision; for him it is actually what his department already does.

CE within the account, manages the interactional space to explicate how things are for him. He works through the issues of how the meetings such as the one HT refers to operate. By re characterising the concerns HT raises as historical CE locates HT's proposal as irrelevant. Getting the planned implementation is actually about clearing problems and one valuable device for achieving this is found to be re characterising them. We see once again that CE and HT's understandings of what their activities are about is rooted in their local experiences, what is more, for them these are adequate, reasonable foundations of knowledge from which to work. In the course of talking about how to implement the change in Organisational structure, just what the vision looks like emerges for CE and HT. It seems that it is when they're actually talking it through that they see what it is that they are about; it is here that their plans emerge.

Planning as an activity was not just about finding a way forward, but making retrospective sense of events. It's in the delineation of what they are planning that they work up a solution. They work out just what the situation is, and from this what has to be done revealed as such particularities as discussions of support networks, particular individuals, role demands, considerations of divisional structure, questions of authority etc.

Telling what the work is

The account CE offers of how his work looks was similar to the accounts⁹ I was offered in talking with the managers, (Part 2). Here it was actually embedded within the business of a meeting. It seemed that CE & HT recognise that as managers they are not going to have the same experiences, knowledge, even if they are from the same company. Important to them is going to be explaining, describing to each other their understanding of the world. To be able to do this is an important practical accomplishment.

CE stresses the "stages" the managers must follow. In offering his description he orientates to a system of ordering, which suggests a systematic approach to the change. It provides CE with a device to clarify HT's understanding. By invoking past and present behaviours CE illustrates and supports the planned change. He sets up his visionary, preferred course of action, "within-a-way-things-used-to-be-done" kind of account, a retrospective sense making. During the telling CE comes to recognise where the past problem in their management structure lay; that it was in not allowing people from outside of marketing to share in the development. Line 234-5, "now I think that's where we're trying to get to, in a sense we're we're reinventing the circle" I hear as CE's

realisation that that is what they're about. Thus it could be that in working up an explanation of what he does for HT, CE achieves clarity in his own mind.

The historical location of the plans

Before moving on in the line by line analysis it is interesting to reflect for a moment on the detail of CE's preceding account, lines 194-251, for it had the quality once again of being a sharing of thoughts, a summing up of his orientation to his work, reflecting perhaps the discovery process by which in this instance future plans evolve.

The example CE recounts of how he achieves a product development is used to support the logic's he espouses as to what an ideal development is like; a loose draft, revised on the basis of relevant comments. "When we've got all that" places these prior stages of work as a requirement, before an outline specification is offered. The issuing of an outline specification emerges naturally from the process. CE clarifies what this document stands as; it is doing no more than saying to the key people "this is what we propose to do." Once again CE's work is found to be making evident the rationale of his actions to HT.

CE's account orientates to his everyday activities and experience as a resource to locate, to identify, to analyse, to classify, to make recognisable what his department does; and to himself and HT to find their way through a comparable situation. CE offers an account of how he expects a product development to run and what he expects from the key people. It is assuredly offered with no reference to troubles or alternative courses of action. By its tone it is instructional and authoritative. "Please from your own little corner of the world" is quite patronising; the "tell me, confirm that you can do it" quite directive. The account continues with an instructional tone "what it will cost you to do it and by when you'll do it" and line 211-212, "but please do not give me comments about whether it is sensible, desirable and done the best way coz that should have already happened".

Line 212-213, "the third stage is you say right we've heard all that practical stuff" suggests the following of a procedure from which automatically the decision is achieved, "we've now decided what we're actually gonna do and here is a final specification for it, which we ask SMC to approve."

CE's telling is offered to HT with little concern to authorise it, or for his right to espouse such a philosophy. CE locates it historically, by reference to "before John Davis;" a measure of time I as an outsider cannot identify with. The account characterises the olden days, and moves on to offer an interpretation of how this came to change. This is used as a justification for their present plans. Effectiveness in the past is offered by CE as sufficient to justify their present plans.

That CE should remark, "I think that's where we are trying to get to, in a sense we're we're reinventing the circle" is nicely reflective and gives retrospective relevance to his prior detailing of past happenings. Line 237, CE characterises the past system as a "boring old ITT paper driven system." This prefaces his criticism of it. It is an opening for CE's further work of lines 238-252 explaining why then, if it was good, it was a prime candidate for "cutting it out." CE stresses the procedure as "the problem;" just following a process is desultory, "you couldn't do this stage unless you did that stage in the system". The extract gives a very clear indication of a member's orientation regarding the nature of past working methods and the effects these have on current plans.

It is interesting to look at the work the "historical perspective" that CE proposes, line 194, does within the account. Its potential use may be to clarify the reason for his desire to change. It is informative of the baseline of their position in marketing. Yet there may be more being done in this telling, something which bears directly upon the commitment of HT, for the information bears directly on the business relevancies of the marketing area. CE takes great care to point out the invidious position of the product specifications. What he offers is the basis by which he wants his commitment to the change to be judged. He does not say so in so many words but he reveals it by the ordered set of concerns he voices where the achievement of a good development is contingent on the cumulative accomplishment of stages. For CE it's a way of saying "that's where we're trying to get to and this is where we're coming from"; so "in a sense we're reinventing the circle". The lesson, proverb, of the story seems to be that change has to be a representation of "the thinking done up front." CE uses the historicity to make it difficult for HT to speak as an expert; he, CE has seen it, done it before.

Unilaterally initiating a new topic

Line 252, "so what ...about this note (1.0) in the SPG?" seems a dramatic change of focus marked by the abrupt closing of the explanation of his work. It suggests that the topic in progress is exhausted for CE and that ascertaining HT's opinion is not significant for him. The 2 second pause appears to be HT's opportunity to take up a turn. In the absence of acknowledgements CE unilaterally moves the business of the meeting on to a new topic by his interrogatory question to HT. The noticeable feature of the talk is the speed of the switch to a new topic.¹⁰ The speed of change might account for HT's difficulty, line 253, in replying to CE's question; his inclusion is unexpected. CE's request for a strategy to deal with the SPG, was to return to the issue of implementing change at the Organisational level. CE seems to create an asymmetry by his assumed right to control the talks course.

CE's brief chat with me before the meeting had let me know that the managers, in particular HT, had presented the plans to the SPG unofficially prior to the planned official

presentation in order to test how they would be received. This testing before presentation, ensuring that their "case" had support and that the timing was right, was taken to be a quite natural way of working by HT and CE. Here CE is chasing up progress on this and their proposal to send a note which CE referred to before the meeting as "basically what was in the memo." HT's reply is tentative, line 258, he offers an excuse for the lack of an official response between the parties. I knew the comment that for "obvious reasons" the SPG had not given it much attention referred to the current preoccupation with the merger.

In what follows we see that just how to make the document effective as a stage in the implementation itself requires agreement between CE & HT. CE does not accept HT's proposal; "I should expand on that a bit, present it to the SPG and make sure we get their support", he qualifies HT; "and then just accept it?" The incorporation of "just" is suggestive of the inadequacy of "acceptance." It is a challenge which drives HT into a careful explication of what he expects to happen. HT's retort is not in the form of a reply directly to CE's question. He answers it indirectly by extending his account of what he plans to do. This is a nice piece of interaction, for HT maintains his right to tell how he will do it and what it looks like for him. The "them" is the SPG, this group for HT will then take on implementation, this and the changes in the marketing division are the "two routes" which "should get it down the Organisation and change the people."

In line 272, CE contradicts HT and offers an explanation of the detail of how implementation without "official powers" might look, "we need terms of reference." For CE there is a distinction between "terms of reference" and "authorities." This is in accord with theories of Matrix structure which make reference to integrating mechanisms between departments. It is about influencing by persuasion not position power. Thus issues between groups are more likely to be dealt with in a collaborative, problem solving way.

In an earlier conversation CE has offered his understanding of "terms of reference" as positions commonly expressed in the Organisational chart; this sets out the membership of the various working groups or departments and how they interconnect. Terms of reference are where expertise and information to legitimise the formal aspects of authority are found and provide one of the means of resolving disagreements occurring under the matrix structure; the cross over point in the hierarchy. As CE understood it coordination of ideas is more likely through reference to these positions in the structure than by authorities, where decisions will be made by rule, procedure and instruction.

As I explored the transcript I became aware that it seemed that talk about "implementation" acted as injunctions to speak managerially, albeit produced in an adhoc fashion and visible as particular assertions triggered by particular sequential exchanges.

Espousing the logic behind their proposed plan was a way to move forward in the implementation.

Troubles telling

In line 275-6, HT questions CE's assertion that the next step in implementation is to determine the terms of reference. HT's concern is a practical one, that it is difficult for him to draw up terms of reference because he doesn't "know the functions". CE neatly achieves a position where he does not retract his wish for terms of reference and actually strengthens it. For CE the issue is not about who draws them up but that they are done. HT's concern is characterised as inappropriate, such a concern is misplaced in this meeting, "we need to have this discussion at your meeting next Wednesday." [The meeting referred to is the Strategic Operations Committee when HT will offer the paper about changing communications across the Organisation.]

The exchange put me in mind of Jefferson & Lee's paper on troubles telling (1981). For HT the fact that he cannot know the terms of reference is a trouble and it is offered to CE as such. CE in some way contaminates HT's activity of troubles telling. He treats the event/situation which constitutes the trouble rather differently. The contaminant is by way of a non-committal sentence which serves to make the troubles telling something already known. One has a sense that it is important for CE that they move on, that in the meeting they uncover new problems. It reveals that for CE this is not an issue which has a place in this meeting, at this time. The focus for CE is not on the troublesomeness for HT as teller but the troublesomeness for their planned implementation. Thus it is clear here once again that CE has a very clear conception of what the meeting is to be concerned with.

CE's solution is offered very early in the troubles telling, in fact he overlaps and interrupts. That this is premature for HT is seen by his continued explanation, lines 286-290, a recurrent later sequence which Jefferson and Lee call "the work up component" in which HT offers a diagnostic, prognostic consideration of the trouble. From Jefferson & Lee's findings it is reasonable to wonder if CE's advice was being resisted for its prematurity and close implicature as much as for the quality, applicability etc of the advice itself. They note that the recommendations, remedies etc may be accepted, the details copied down, although a recipient may have no intention of actually using them. That is to say that acceptance or rejection may be largely an interactional matter, produced by reference to the current talk and more or less independent of intention or actual subsequent use.

In the data we can see how both parties work up an explanation of the trouble. Thus explanation or understanding seem sufficient to resolve the trouble, at least in the context

of issues to deal with in the meeting. By explication of its detail the trouble is worked through.¹¹

In line 289, HT's concern extends to whether it is influential people that are wanted or those who understand. Thus for him knowledge is not equated with influence, one cannot have the best of both worlds and one of their problems is with what kind of person they want to reference. CE characterises HT as jumping ahead in his concern, for CE there is something about managing one stage at a time, line 279. The fact that they need terms of reference is enough for the present stage of implementation.

In lines 294-298 HT continues to work up his concerns. By the preface "but I'm just worried" HT reveals a concern to continue with his topic, a concern that people "too high up in the group don't understand the real issues." This leads CE to make use of an experience he has had in his division in order to resolve HT's concerns. Both CE and HT orientate to an assumption that the chairmanship role is influential in determining the meetings outcome; but that being influential and knowing what the meeting is about is not synonymous. What is interesting is that what they go on to work up is a theory of how to construct a meeting in order to get their department's opinions heard.

For CE the role of chairman provides a solution. The chairman is "neutral" and therefore not representing his group, but by having another individual present he can ensure his particular group's ideas are represented by someone who can actually participate in the meetings.

Following the interruption of the secretary, line 307, HT uses this break in the interaction to grab hold of the space to continue his explication of what should go into the document. This is an important competence, the interruption provides a break in the turn take. In a two party interaction either party might take the first turn after the interruption.

HT opens returning to the issue of the SPG document, line 308. He in fact uses the interruption to reintroduce an earlier topic. The opening appears carefully formulated, "I suppose it's fairly ethereal," as if he is anticipating trouble. That the issue of meetings he raises may be received as of little significance might be the reason for the length of time HT takes to work up to the comment that "everyone always seems to be in meetings". It is in fact a terribly protracted kind of opening; "you know that one of the things. put in my document .. that Gary said when he came in here.. when I came in," lines 308-314.

Subsequent lines suggest that what in fact he is trying to do is to introduce a criticism of the existing communication structure at AB and he doesn't know CE's position. The consequence is a hesitant, tentative exploration of just what he can say; a testing of the

interactive waters and a testing out of what is an acceptable item to include in the document.

Members conception of meetings

Behind both the manager's understanding of the planned change is something like a 'commonsense theory' about why things work out as they do. Over lines 313-481 the success and efficiency of meetings as a means to put the implementation in place is found to be significant for CE and HT. We find that they offer some practical logic's as to the value of meetings. That they differ in the logic's they espouse *means they have work to do to move on in the discussion.*

It may be that HT and CE's concern with the way meetings are managed is to see them as activities to help weave change into AB. Given that they know meetings affect the flow of information it could be that HT & CE feel the need to explore just what they understand the work of meetings to consist in. Though there is this feeling that something needs to be done they can't agree on what it should be. The two managers we find have different orientations to the use of meetings. Within this instance of talk the likely success of the planned implementation comes to depend as much on changing or modifying their belief in what meetings can accomplish as it does on actually changing their behaviour.

HT works to set up an interactional and sequential context which, specifically, would foster acceptance of his characterisation of meetings, lines 315-329. HT works up a view of too many meetings existing within the Organisation. In the course of doing so he espouses something of his understanding as to what meetings consist in. We learn that for the managers meetings are recognised as a tool to get things done, a means to coordinate. But there is an issue here for the managers about how useful they are; what influences their usefulness. In this case, perhaps because both are senior managers, it becomes quite a detailed debate, worthy of study in its own right. It seemed to me that on such occasions we were learning something about how senior managers view meetings.

The managers in attending to a problem of understanding and definition, reveal something of the properties of the object under discussion. Clearly they have different definitions, different characterisations and it is these different definitions that are creating the problem and the need for discussion. The extract is interesting because it is not something contrived for the researcher, it's part of CE and HT doing their work. For them reaching an agreement as to the value of meetings, their problems and the correct ways to manage them is significant. It is talk which is part of dealing with a changing situation, in which people are dealing with and evaluating their managerial practice.

HT prefaces his account with an invitation to CE to tell him differently. He offers his account as his own view, line 314, "don't know whether it's true". For him the problem of the current communication structure is that people currently work on a bilateral basis. Implementation of a matrix structure is for him a way to resolve this particular problem. HT advocates group meetings rather than "one to ones" because "you should be able to get further a lot more quickly". This points to a concern for time. However HT implies that there could be a managerial dilemma, that influencing is easier on a one to one basis but that that slows things down.

Lines 316-329 are a clear vision of how HT sees the working of the Organisation. He invokes a commonly held notion of Organisational structure; that influence is about contact with people outside your function and at different levels of seniority. For HT a well run group or committee is the answer to communication problems.

CE replies with a kind of polite deferral, "well my impression is most people.. let topics move before they become too publicly committed". For CE then, HT is wrongly characterising what meetings are about; there is potential disagreement in their members' logic; just because a lot of people are present within a meeting does not mean they can reach consensus.

CE offers an understanding of the way he uses meetings. For him meetings are about going through the main points of the work, identifying problems and setting up for their resolution. What makes for the success of this is "the collaboration" between people. Thus for CE it is not the communication structure that is the problem, it is the way the meetings are "run." HT's concern with one to one meetings is that they are slow, line 328, yet CE line 330-334 suggests that for him this is an essential element of the work, and not a problem.

CE makes reference to people seeking time out of the meeting to "think." This justifies the reconvening of meetings, and the time spans in between them. Thus for CE the time it takes to make a decision is part of the natural process, it is part of what management is all about. That meetings are where one is "publicly committed" is an interesting characterisation; for CE it seems there is something about being "pinned down" in a meeting to a decision.

Following this difference of opinion there seems some interactional difficulty. Given that they must continue their meeting HT & CE must find a way to manage the disagreement and continue the interaction. HT reinterprets CE's characterisation of why meetings are slow, that they're not being run correctly. HT seems to recognise that his view is potentially open for disagreement. This is made visible by his suffix "I feel," which characterises this opinion as personal to him, and as such allows for disagreement. CE

manages the interaction by offering another alternative interpretation. For him the magnitude of a managerial problem affects the speed of development. This implies that HT's blaming of the communication structure is not sufficiently evident. CE then proceeds to locate the issue of meetings in terms of how it is that he manages them. This closes the potential for disagreement, but leaves open the issue of what the problem of meetings for the Organisation as a whole is. The manner of this telling is educational, suggestive of some superior knowledge on CE's part. One almost gets the impression of listening to a theorist speaking to a practitioner. The consequence of the telling is not stated, CE leaves it to HT to infer the implications of his reporting avoiding taking an official position of correcting HT.

In line 352-3, CE espouses still further his understanding of meetings, "I'm rather an anti-big-meetings kind of person," to which HT elicits a minimal acknowledgement. Over the course of the interaction there appears to have been a number of potential points for agreement but they are not developed nor is the topic brought back to the original problem of too many meetings.

It is interesting to see how CE builds up his account. He starts off with "my impressions," line 330 strengthens to line 355, "my observations" to line 359, "I'll tell you". These build up to a firm prescription. It is interesting for it shows an interactional balance between the parties. It begins in a tentative, low key way of raising an issue and is met with a low key response, as one party voices an opinion with greater strength so the others replies strengthen. There could be conflict when differences of opinion exist but, line 357-8, there is an indication that though they may not agree, they can move on.

It is noticeable that once again CE is comfortable, interactionally asserting his view, and that HT does not challenge that view. In that it is CE who frequently asserts a position and who offers corrections to HT's accounts it is CE whom we find to be the dominant party. HT is sensitive to CE's account. He does not contest his views despite their different understandings, in fact he aligns to them. This is revealed much earlier by the pattern of interaction and provides a nice illustration of how this type of analysis can demonstrate relationships between parties.

In lines 355-6, CE suggests there are problems within meetings and for him these appear as problems of people not collaborating or being bored. HT accepts this, but for CE this is not sufficient to close the topic. There is another problem, that people "like being in meetings". Thus for CE there are concerns over the effectiveness of meetings, but they are about how people behave in them not about meetings themselves. Line 363 HT's exclamation "extraordinary" is a strong display of surprise and marks a moment of recognition. As such it seems perhaps to be a means for HT to buy back into the relationship by revealing his subordinate understanding. HT continues to offer his

opinion suggesting why people are often in meetings. That it's because they are not sure what they are about, CE agrees, but HT goes on to say that this problem is because the meetings are adhoc. In line 369 CE's characterisation of meetings does not allow for this. In fact his characterisation preserves the principle of meetings being places to achieve things in, it does not accommodate questions about the relevance of meetings as communication structures.

The disagreement is met by HT attempting to reconstruct a defence. HT pays great attention to how he makes his point. He establishes that his comments are not because this is a new business to him, he evokes evidence that another manager who is from a different industry supports him, line 371-74. He does however admit that it may be due to the complexity of the Financial Service Industry. Prior to offering his opinion HT makes explicit the very arguments that CE may put up as to why there are so many meetings within the Organisation. By making them explicit in the first instance it would appear to be a device to curtail CE's potential countervailing argument. Such work would appear to be an interactional device to show he is aware of how his comments may be perceived. HT's account, provided for as a possibility which is contingent upon a certain set of actions or circumstances, asserts uncertainty and defensiveness. This expression of uncertainty could have an interactional use. Such expressions provide ways of accommodating a disagreement while re-offering an initial account, as Lynch (1985) says

"uncertainty" (as a formatting device) is socially occasioned; it is expressed subsequent to a challenge, and is visible as an interactive device which implicates the sequential environment as well as the asserted relationship of the speaker to the object in question." pg 213

CE personalises his disagreement; he uses his working practice to support his claim orientating to 'one to one' meetings as a natural part of his work. By so doing he makes it difficult for HT to disagree without telling CE that he doesn't know what he does.

It might be said that we have here a nice example of managers working up their understanding of what significant issues are for them; it reveals how worries become defined as problems. Thus what starts off as a 'gut feeling' becomes crystallised into something which is collaboratively recognised as an issue to be addressed. Thus it is in a sense to see them formulating strategy.

Is this an example of problem recognition, a critical competence for Senior managers, where the emergence of the problem resides as a logical outcome of description and diagnosis between the parties? Could it be how ideas for change first come to fruition? One could almost imagine the idea to change to a matrix structure coming from a similar discussion, something that two managers can "build together."

HT overlaps CE, line 387, reacting firstly with agreement to CE's comment then suggesting "the excuse is always meetings." In line 389, CE clarifies what HT is reacting

to. CE makes it seem that HT's view is counter to his by the directness of his question, "you find it odd that?" It is almost an expression of disbelief. HT explains his concern of there being too many one to one meetings and offers a view that "there ought to be more system". For HT there can be a formal communication structure for routine business.

HT's turn retains much of the passivity of earlier lines in part created by his attention to his relationship to the project, line 401, as "sitting over there." Interactionally HT's evaluation of his position allows for modification; modification that is as a device for not accepting the account as it stands. The grounds for modification are provided by HT himself. Line 405-6, CE re characterises the issue as the way the problem is seen. He sees it as people wanting to know too much, thus the issue is people's expectations, not the nature of meetings. The character of the problem is elaborated and re described. That it might be a problem with individuals, not what meetings are about is a member's understanding which is occasioned in the specifics of the dispute.

Given that the two managers see the problem in different ways HT attempts to offer a solution to the problem, lines 410-414. For CE this is now a "different matter" and one he therefore agrees with. By making explicit what they are attending to as something different CE makes it possible to move on from the disagreement of the earlier section; but it is not that CE wants to avoid it, line 429, he dismisses HT's comments, "no I accept all that". CE reveals a concern not to work on areas of agreement but to have a particular point understood, line 431-3, that informally they have always worked on matrix lines.

CE's remark "though you may not realise it", line 431-2, is licensed by HT's earlier admittal of "sitting over there", that is not being in the marketing department. It allows CE to speak again as expert. For CE changing the Organisational structure involves more than just putting in a system of meetings. The change for CE is about functions opening up to each other; for him meetings are needed to "free wheel ideas", "to share a bit." The problem he implies lies with the people; lines 432-448 rely again for their sense upon experience within AB. CE and HT's understanding of meetings is one located within the factors local to their use in AB. The example of the sales department used to clarify how meetings should be done, reveals a felicitous members characterisation of the sales department. It typifies it as an arena of complaints and a department needing to work to a specific agenda.

In line 450 CE takes up the turn following a silence suggesting that the question of meetings is not as easy to simplify. This implies the issue is not resolvable in this instance and serves to move to a closing and to bring the meeting back on course.

CE's comment about an individual "Gary's" always achieving "quick meetings" could be received by HT as carrying an underlying reproach for the length of this meeting. Line

491 HT's, "mhmm mmh (0.5) okay.well. I'll draw up," could be seen to initiate a closing, by a commitment to undertake work outside of this meeting; drawing up the document. This implies the possible completion of the 'topic in progress'. CE's response "can I be of anymore help?" achieves a suggestion of closing by attending to the overall management of the conversation. It is nicely equivocal; it both references these past discussions and opens space for a new topic to be raised, "the budget."

Conclusion

The above account has elaborated upon the way in which the manager's work is sensitive to a local interactive context, in particular agreement and disagreement, an insitu accomplishment of the talk. Indeed for the parties themselves whether they are evaluating the state of their plans, discussing possible problems, finding a way forward or whatever is an issue to be worked out interactionally.

The analysis provides an entry into a selected instance of managerial work sensitive to the collaborative work of the managers in establishing "what are problems", "where uncertainty was", and "what is of significance to future plans" as it appertains to their conception of how well plans are being implemented. It reveals something of what an occasion in the daily administration of strategic plans consists of.

We learn what in this instance working through implementation plans¹² consists of; as one of the activities that these senior managers are involved with in their daily work. It is found to be an occasion for accounting for their understandings of the planned work, their preferences and their philosophies of how to manage it. An occasion of attempting to achieve an agreed to and shared understanding of the situation.

It is an occasion where commonsense and practical logic's of management are made visible. Indeed it appears that explanation provides the managers with a way to achieve the agreement needed to move out of a potential disagreement which might take them away from the main business of the meeting. Thus both "doing agreement " and "doing explanation" would seem to be important aspects of management. Certainly both are conducive to ongoing relations between the parties.

Implementation of plans is found to have a complex character, it is not simply a question of seeing what the position is and then working out what should be done.¹³ What the situation is, is itself something which has to be worked out. Working that out involves "teasing out both the operational complexities of the site and the Organisational contingencies"¹⁴; the likely knock-on effects within marketing, the possible individuals who may block the change. Problems have to be discovered, defined and explored to be solved.

Exploration even of such a small extract of talk allows entry into one particular occasion of what I have chosen to refer to as "strategic planning". We learn that before the Matrix structure is implemented the managers have to work out who is to be involved, how much people have to be told, how far they have to agree with what was happening, what resistance they might put up, etc. Part of implementing a change in Organisational structure for CE is involving his direct reports; Head of Product Marketing and Head of Investment Marketing in establishing services that influence other departments; to instil in them that "they should care about everything rather than just their own little bit of the world" transmitting this through co-ordinating activities. The need to "clear authorities" is mentioned; the need to make the consultation happen, to get support, to set standards, to know how rivals work. All these are raised as significant features in getting the work done.

The problems are mentioned, such as the need to achieve a common vision on the development, to create a climate of understanding at the top and to find the appropriate time and place for the communication of their ideas. The way to put the change in place is mentioned, by the meeting of the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) and by "people's involvement". It is as CE says that these "two routes working together should sort of get down the Organisation and change the thinking".

For the managers it seemed they need to make clear to each other their objectives and their understandings about what the change looks like. Only if they achieve a common perspective can they "create a climate of understanding that that's what's going on". What the plans amount to, how they will be operationalised has to be worked out in the events of the meeting. They are found to define the problem according to their individual concerns. In this instance it is for CE the need to achieve a proceduralisation of corporate practices in order to attain higher standards within his division. For HT it seems something about a personal interest in improving communication systems in the Organisation.

We learn something of the managers understanding of Organisational structure through their discussions. It is found to include consideration of divisional structures, co-ordinating activities, role demands, questions of ownership and authority, spans of control; something not unlike the traditional principles of Organisation, though this is to employ terms that the managers themselves do not employ. These appear in the data in such 'espoused logic's' as "it's not an instruction b' your tryin to influence him, to change his direction", "there's certainly no question of anyone having official power" and the reference to the need to move from "traditional to bilateral meetings." The managers see the specific character of the Organisational structure and division of labour within the Organisation as determined by its local environment, not as some "out there phenomena,"

but as the day to day flow of events. From the point of view of the accomplishment of the planned change the tasks appear as personalised, the Organisation consists of a number of positions occupied by particular persons. Otto and Richard have specific roles to fill out and for CE and HT understanding these particular individuals' characteristic ways of knowing and doing is important because it is through them that implementation is accomplished. Thus for CE and HT the division of labour, is not about the impersonal performance of tasks but about specific individuals and their views.

In the Introduction to the thesis I acknowledge the work of Lynch (1985) and his identification of two distinct types of discourse within science. Lynch identifies "talk about science" as distinguished from "talking science," that is talk as material for the accomplishment of actions (which includes the accomplishment of "talk about science".)

In the materials of this chapter something like "talk about management" is found. That is to say the descriptive function of language is found to advance the work of the managers. An accountable part of the managers' work is explanation and description. These occasions of explanation & description were interesting for me as analyst not only as occasions of "doing description" but for what they might reveal of the 'lineaments of management' that the managers orientate to. They serve to reveal that members' theories are practical devices for making some sense of what the complexity and uncertainty of their world consists in.

In this extract how CE and HT construct and comprehend the concept of matrix management is observable and revealing of how the managers organise their experience of the world. The reporting by CE of what the matrix structure of his division looks like, couched in stories of his experience and local examples, is I suggest part of the socially acknowledged, normal course of affairs. It is accepted that they as managers contribute their opinion to the formulation of an implementation plan, the solving of problems, negotiating or, whatever, and it reveals the practical importance of members theories and espoused logic's. In the accomplishment of their work it seemed the managers hold to and employ certain theories and conceptions of their world. This fuelled my interest in just what these managers' versions of their work could reveal.

In the next chapter I explore the adequacy of an approach which focuses upon the accounts managers' offer of their work in an effort to make apparent the reasoning behind the work of Part 2; an interest in "talk about management." The chapter suggests that the interest in "talking management" and "talk about management" I develop are not mutually exclusive but constituent features of management work.

Notes

¹ Reid (1989), Bourgeois & Brodwin (1984), Higgins (1978) Dutton & Duncan (1987) amongst others point to the trend to consider strategic planning only at the Organisational level. Similarly a large body of literature on strategic planning interested in the diagnosis, problem formulation and decision processes highlights the needs for examining strategists cognitions (Dutton et al 1983)

² The traditional conception of rationality rests on an economic model of decision making that presumes there exists one best solution to a problem and that the manager uses the appropriate logic and data to choose his best solution. Bourgeois & Brodwin (1984) argue that the "commander model" prevails in the literature on strategic planning. They suggest that the model, though of limited value remains for ideological reasons. The model assumes the top manager is the rational actor behind the strategic plan and thus it is implemented in accordance with his intentions throughout the Organisation. Reid (1989) adopts a model of intended rationality as an organising principle for the implementation of activities this proposes that individuals are limited in their ability to develop alternatives, evaluate their consequences, and to make unequivocal choices based upon such analyses and preferences. Typically he suggests managers employ logical and individually rational processes for decisions within these constraints.

³ Spencer and McAuley (1985) would have it that this document in itself represents an invaluable source of knowledge about the management. Indeed, the memo could be taken to represent a formal expression of the ground rules of matrix management.

⁴ I acknowledge a debt to Sharrock & Anderson (1987). Indeed their work provided an apprenticeship in how to do ethnomethodological studies for they write in a manner which makes the frequently complex project of ethnomethodology accessible. To a non-sociologist, as I am, the provision of a vocabulary more attuned to everyday parlance has been essential "equipment" in gaining the courage to attempt an ethnomethodologically informed study.

⁵ See Maynard (1991:178) for a discussion of lay : professional partitioning.

⁶ Tannen & Wallerstein (1987)

⁷ As Jayyusi (1991) says the very organisation of the details of a persons discourse, her/his description, judgements and inferences make available the 'values', 'relevancies', 'concerns' of that person. Here CE relies upon HT as someone who knows how to hear his explanations. Between the two the discussion and explanation produces a set of shared in 'common understandings,' Garfinkel (1967) pg 107.

⁸ For some interesting work on agreement see Lynch (1985) chapters 5 & 6. Also Sacks (1987) "The preference for agreement and continuity" in Button & Lee (1987).

⁹ It was something like a story, see Jefferson (1979) "Sequential aspects of story telling" in Schenkein (1979) Studies in the organisation of conversational interaction.

¹⁰ Compare the findings of Button (1991b) pg 251-277

¹¹ It bore a resemblance to Jeffersons (1980) paper on troubles telling which recognises that the

"proffering of advice in the course of a troubles telling with its new and reversed set of categories and their attendant rights and obligations may implicate an altogether different form of talk ie not a troubles telling but what various interaction analysts call the service encounter."

The advice seeker delivers the particulars of his condition only until he or she need no longer do so, only until the advice giver has resolved the trouble.

¹² It is not as one of Mintzberg & Waters (1989) strategic types suggests that;

“Strategies originate in formal plans: precise intentions exist, formulated & articulated by central leadership backed up by formal controls to ensure surprise free implementation in benign, controllable or predictable environments.”

¹³The literature on implementation; Nutt (1987), Bourgeois & Brodwin (1984) though advocating the study of real situations by direct observation nonetheless classifies findings such that potentially rich description is lost. Frequently seeing implementation as a series of steps to be undertaken.

¹⁴Anderson, Sharrock & Hughes (1989 pg 108)

***“Experience is not what happens to a man
it is what a man does with what happens to him”***

R.D.Laing

Introduction to Part 2

During exploration of the data in Part 1, I became increasingly aware that explanation and description formed a routine part of the managers talk in their work. What I am suggesting is that in the occasions of talk explored in preceding chapters it seemed the managers were espousing some logic, orientating to some members theories of management, revealing something of what they understood management work to consist in. Thus even in “talking management” they “talk about management.”

In Part 1 occasions of “talk about management” were sporadic, in the sense that they were scattered across occasions of talk. There were other situations where the managers had cause to account for their work in a less sporadic way. One such instance was the accommodation of my (as researcher's) interest in their work. Initial meetings with the managers were occasions for “talk about management,” rich as accounts of what, as they understood it, they did.

Initially I saw these ‘tours’ as ethnographically convenient. However, it occurred to me that such occasions as these were in fact part of the managers work. The competence to “talk about their work” was of importance in relation to various visiting agents; customers, competitors, colleagues etc. More importantly this discourse was revealing of a set of resources relied upon to make sense of their lives.

In Part 2 I attempt to develop my enquiry towards these occasions of “talk about management”. On hearing the managers talk I had a feeling that these organised ways of talking somehow built up into a ‘line of regard’ that might just enable recovery of how managers make sense of events.

Chapter 5 is concerned with what such an interest might contribute to our understanding of managerial work and how one might develop an adequate analytical approach, context sensitive and adequate at the level of social interaction. An approach which respected the principles of ethnomethodology and which addresses the materials so as to reveal the managers commonsense understandings and orientations in a way that would not idealise them by the device of extrinsic description.

Chapters 6, 7 & 8 each address a particular managers account of his work and explore how it is as individuals that they give shape and meaning to their world. Adequate access

to the understanding of management work is found to be inseparable from an understanding of the social order of an accounts construction. These chapters are informed by two analytically distinct but empirically entwined interests;

1. *How the narrative unfolds* - More specifically, an interest in conversational practices managers rely upon in achieving an explanation of their work, and in how the accounts provide instructions for their interpretation and for authorisation of their facticity.
2. *An interest in the conceptual schemes / verbal depiction's of membership* employed in this recognisably "talk about management." The themes and topics the managers orientate to revealing something of their "line of regard". The "preferences" and "prescriptions" the managers reveal in portraying themselves as managers doing managerial things.

Chapter 9 seeks to reflect upon the outcomes of Part 2. It finds that the managers seem to subscribe to and share a number of preferred orientations when shaping up an account of their work.

*"All in all
Each man in all men
all men in each man*

*All being in each being
Each being in all being*

*All in each
Each in all
All distinctions are mind, by mind, in mind, of mind
No distinctions to mind to distinguish."*

R.D.Laing 1970

Chapter 5- Managers accounts, "Talk about the work"

This chapter serves as an extended introduction to chapters 6, 7 & 8. As such it serves to revisit some of the conceptual issues raised in the introduction. In particular the interest is in "talk about management," talk which is characterised by it's descriptive nature.

The consideration behind this chapter is to explain the switch to a detailed and empirically grounded concern with "talk about management", the work of Part 2, as distinguished from "talking management," the concern of Part 1. An approach which might on initial inspection seem at variance with that of Part 1. It is to provide an insight for those whose interests might have led them to approach the data in a different way; that is a line of argument rather than a defence.

It is important for me to address the conceptual implications and assumptions of Part 2, for as I understand it the requirement of sound research is demonstration of a well worked and well understood approach, positioned with respect to other intellectual endeavours. It is a chapter I began writing as I started to explore the accounts that the managers offered of their work, as such it introduces the themes that Part 2 might begin to develop. It addresses some of the concerns that I faced along the road of exploring what a detailed and descriptive examination of "talk about management work" might yield, and in discovering what analytical approach such an enquiry would require.

It was the discovery during the work informing Part 1 that explanation is important to the accomplishment of particular activities of management which supported a move from an interest solely with "talking management" to an interest in "talk about management." Indeed part of the managers' occupational work is found to be providing others with explanations. In Chapter 4 we see how in an actual business meeting the two managers;

CE & HT become inquirers into their definition of the situation; just what matrix management consists in and how it can best be implemented. They recognise that they both have different understandings of the situation and that before they can move on in the meeting they have to achieve some kind of agreed direction for the work.

As I observed the managers at work I found that there were occasions where "talk about management" was being done in a concerted manner, occasions not so different from the occasions of "talk to me". Such occasions as when the managers offer a verbal tour of their work for colleagues in another division or for those outside of their Organisation or industry; suppliers, customers, the public, even researchers. IC in Chapter 8, commenting on the way he worked with his staff actually likened it to the occasion of talking to me; "I think the basic activity is one to one discussions like this to be honest.", line 508.

Such 'tours' were part of the managers working day. Referring to his talk with me one manager said "its a part of advertising and public relations, it's to do with how I relate to other people, it's to do with the way I think I should be broadcasting the work of this department". Indeed it seems on observing the managers that they were frequently involved in the 'logical evaluation' of their activities. This we see in accounting to peers, shareholders, the media, communicating with customers, in establishing new 'networks' of relationships, in performance assessments. On many occasions in their work they were faced with the need to present themselves as someone who is doing managerial work.

If for the managers, talk about what they do is an important and serious affair then it was worthy I considered of attention. It seemed to me that to focus on just those practices that produce talk as "management talk" would be to ignore the important distinction between members' ability to perform an activity and their ability to talk sensibly about it in a practical sense. Being able to perform an activity did not ensure one could talk accurately or interestingly about it. Yet to my mind the managers could shape up just such a telling of their lives.¹ They orientated to, sought to identify their work for pragmatic purposes. If this members' knowledge is not found to be adequate for theoretical/ sociological explanation it is seen to be adequate for the managers practical purposes.

The challenge for me now became, could something informative be obtained by an exploration of these managers' accounts?² Could the analysis of accounts be made to square with a position more faithful to the genesis of these accounts? This chapter thus maps out the principles driving a somewhat different kind of analysis of ethnographic material than Part 1. What I hope this chapter does is awaken some interest in the reader for the material that follows, pointing to something of the likely fertility of exploring accounts.

The chapter is structured in relation to three lines of analytic interest, these reflect the central issues I addressed in developing the approach of Part 2.

- a) Reflections on Part 1's findings in the light of a reading of Lynch (1985) and the question it raises concerning the analytical status of the managers talk to me as "talk about management work."
- b) A review of the literature on accounts, in particular with respect to the relationship between accounts and the reality they are purported to represent.
- c) A consideration of epistemological and methodological issues that concern the use of accounts.

Why this interest in accounts?

In the introduction I acknowledge the work of Lynch (1985) whose treatment of scientists "shop talk" was a motivation behind the approach of this study. Lynch in this study recognises that scientific work exists in formats of extrinsic description: tours for visitors, reports on projects which give coherent accounts and explanations of stages of the lab projects developments.

Lynch exploits the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic description of scientific work by contrasting "literary accounts" of science with talk which is accountably present in scientific work, "laboratory shop talk". A contrast between "talk about science" and "talking science" distinguishes two distinct modes of discourse within scientific enterprises. "Talk about science" is exemplified in the discussions within laboratory tours and research reports, characterised by the way they exhibit laboratory work in a descriptive and recipient designed format.

This supported my early research interest in the accounts the managers had given me, at a time in the research when it seemed there was little point following my hunch that they were interesting. It seemed that the accounts the managers offered to me were instances of "talking about management."³ These accounts were compelling and though Lynch chooses not to attend to such 'tours' of the work I felt they might occupy a different status in terms of an understanding of managerial work. Management was primarily, it seemed, accomplished through talk, whereas "doing science" was not necessarily so significantly verbal an activity.

I had initially been interested in adopting the notion "talk about management" as a way of distinguishing the managers' accounts to me from "talking management," discourse which is part of the work of doing management. But as the research developed it became clear that "talk about management" could not be taken to mean just that talk which consisted of instances where managers offered extrinsic accounts of their work. This was

to move on from Lynch's (1985) notion of two distinct modes of discourse; "talk about management" and "talking management" which early on in the research I had borrowed. Lynch had attended to scientists' "talk about Science" which consisted in tours and research reports but had not attended to the "talk about science" as an integral part of the routine of the 'bench work' of science.

At this stage I want to develop an argument that there is a difference between management work and the work of other occupational groups such as scientists. Considering the work of management and the work of scientists I was left wondering if an understanding of what is going on in particular occasions of management work is provided by talk, to a much greater extent than in science?

Scientific work has an 'embodied visibility' to persons manipulating items of apparatus, laboratory specimens, and preparing chemicals at the work bench. In the case of the managers one observes them, at their desk, on the telephone, in the offices of their division, seated with others around a table etc. What is most significant is the fact that their work seems frequently to consist just in verbal exchanges or work essentially accompanied by talk. There are occasions of silence in their work; for example during the analysing of financial figures & reports. I would not want to suggest this was an absence of activity, but that this did not represent a major part of their time.⁴ The managers themselves did not elevate the solitary work to an important position. They rarely made diary time for it, but typically undertook it between meetings, whilst waiting for visitors, before or after traditional working hours. AC for example kept aside most of his "non-essential" post or written work and would "typically attend to it on flights to New York". As one manager replied, upon my request to watch him at work; "it's not so much watching as listening." It was noticeable that from the occasions of "silent work", for example the manager studying a set of accounts, talk occurred or if not further talk then some further collaborative work, for example the procedure of memo sending (Chapter 2). Thus silence was not as prevalent a feature of the managers work as Lynch finds in the work of scientists' researching. This seemed to confirm the relevance of an interest in "talk" as constituent of managerial work. It is my contention that the managers' capacity through talk to afford a visibility by description to their work, far from being peripheral to the work is integral to its accomplishment.

As I mentioned earlier Lynch does not explore "talk about science," though he recognises it as an organisational feature of the lab, an accountable part of doing routine laboratory work. His interest lies elsewhere. It seemed however, that to pursue an investigation into the descriptive practice, "talking about management" could be to offer much in the way of theoretical import. It pointed to an interest in "talk about management" as a behavioural feature of the work itself; an area as yet unexplored.

In Chapter 3 when CE and HT discuss what they understand matrix management to consist in, they seem to orientate to it as if through the construction of a cautionary tale, or through stories of past occurrences they could reveal something about what it is that they do. This practical theorising from an ethnomethodological standpoint would be treated as social action. As such it occurred to me that it would be interesting to see how the managers construct a view of their world.

Such an interest recognises as Sharrock and Button (1991) pg 147 succinctly put it

“that 'social reality' for the purposes of sociological theorising is not 'the same object' as 'social reality' for the purposes of everyday life.”

They make the point that this is not to suggest there are many realities but to recognise the diversity of purposes for which people talk about life, management or whatever. It is to recognise that in the daily routines of their work the managers may not have cause to conceive their work in the same way as I had done in Part 1.

The analytic status of 'tours.'

I have already hinted that I have chosen to select the data for investigation from the occasions of meetings that I had with the senior managers.

Johnson and Kaplan (1980) note how in interviews concerned with work experiences the researcher generates *"talk about the work."* Early in the research I collected a considerable amount of data through talking with the managers about their work. I had found these occasions fascinating and informative. In not using it in early work I always felt they represented a rich and clearly undervalued resource, a possible point of entry into the managers world. It now occurred to me that here was a source of “talk about management.”

It seemed this data was worth exploring for it pointed to something of the ethos of the managers whose work I was observing. Such an interest however had to be achieved by an analysis of accounts which would offer a contribution to work in the ethnomethodological paradigm. The interest in naturally occurring data, instances of interaction that are not set up for the research purposes, had been established earlier in the research. Here I was proposing exploring data that was constructed for me as researcher. Thus a critical question (one I deal with in more depth later in this chapter) became to what extent was exploration of the talk between myself and the managers going to offer an efficacious approach?

Some readers might already be questioning my choice of data. In support of my decision I would share with the reader a number of factors that informed my decision to attend to

this data. By so doing I hope to expose something of the process that led me to move to what might appear to be a new area of interest.

At the outset of the research I had not expected to use this data in such a manner. It was for pragmatic reasons of attaining a rudimentary understanding of the managers world, that I had asked them to explore what being a senior manager meant to them. Analytically and methodologically I might be on stronger grounds if I was to attend to more conventional sites of management work such as those in Part 1. However, with an interest in occasions of "talk about management" it occurred to me that here, with the data I already had there was a wonderfully economic source of managers' accounts concerned with the depiction of their work. A source of accounts I could attend to so long as I did not make claims as to the adequacy of these descriptions or take them as general comment on management work

Indeed it occurred to me that exploration of the accounts might capture something of the 'line of regard', the 'practical logic's' managers appeared to hold and orientate to in accomplishing their work, and that one only had glimpses of in their daily work. It provided materials, personal accounts of experience, which commented on the features of managerial work.

To explore only those insights afforded in situated occasions of management seemed not unlike trying to understand the strategy of a chess player from the current position of the players on the chess board. As Anderson, Sharrock and Hughes (1989) pg 75 suggest

"attitudes to business life and management operate as the basis upon which lines of social action are drawn up. They have to do with conceptions of oneself and others expressed or encapsulated in a conception of what appropriate management is."

Nothing in the managers response to my request to talk with them led me to believe it was bizarre or unexpected. I do not wish to deny the fact that the activity of talking to a research student was an untypical event yet the activity was accommodated much as any other request for their time. It was the managers who made it the occasion it became, my initial request had been to learn something about their work, to which they responded with an invitation to interview. The situation of interview was their routine way of accommodating my inquiry. I use the term interview with caution for I do not wish to imply the managers held to traditional conceptions of interview (particularly research interviews.)⁵ There were times in the talk when the turn-taking provisions of the conventional interview were less apparent and the talk appeared more like occasions of "conversation" or "speech making."

The data reveals, contrary to expectations, that the managers frequently set the agenda and that the talk is not characterised by a preponderance of question and answer turns, the talk being characterised by long stretches of talk from the managers. In order to avoid

importing my understandings and thus guiding their talk I kept my questions⁶ to a minimum, allowing open ended discussions to emerge, relying on the managers to define, during the course of the interviews the scope and content of their work. Indeed I attempted to refrain from commentary and utterances displaying alignment.⁷ In this sense the interview can be recovered as a conversational encounter and might be seen as work in itself. One might however ask, how are these occasions of managerial work? This question I address in the next section for it merits some attention.

I should admit to an attachment to this data that made me wish to use it, perhaps because of some kind of feeling of accomplishment in gaining the managers' interest and support. This was "data hard won." Perhaps also an affection for the "characters" who so courteously opened the door to their world. I had expected my requests for meetings with the managers to be met by disinterest, suspicion and a general reluctance to participate. Buchanan, Boddy and McCalman (1988) suggests this to be their experience. But I was not shown a closed door, nor were my demands on their time secondary to their other work. They clearly took it seriously, made firm appointments with me, which they kept to. Something that I learned later (from observing them) indicated the seriousness of the meeting, for they were not above rescheduling meetings. In many instances telephones were redirected and requests made to personal assistants to stop interruptions. They kept others waiting in order to extend discussions with me, allowing me to interrupt their daily schedule, indeed they seemed to find it a positive experience. As one of the managers said in response to my request "such occasions are valuable; probably if I can articulate what I do then I can understand the process of management better." The managers had documentation that explained their work; job description, performance criteria; but they did not just offer these formal prescriptions; nor upon my referral to them did they see them as offering an adequate explanation of their work; they felt a compulsion to say more.

Although each manager had a sense of what managing was, the nature and content of work was accounted for by the managers in remarkably different ways. I was particularly struck by the way in which the managers accounts reached beyond the details of the work routines; they clearly concerned a level of "being" as well as "doing." The version of management which I received seemed to me, not so much an adequate description of management work for use as "ethnographic data" as it was a morally sensitive, personal account.

This interest in accounts does not assume they are neutral occasions of explanation. Indeed I was reminded of McHoul's work (1987) on interrogators, that an activity such as describing is rarely seen by members as "describing for its own sake." Indeed doing describing may be and often is part of some wider conversational activity orientated towards the achievement of an end eg persuading, justifying, making claims.

During the 'talk to me' it may be possible that the managers felt required to offer positive accounts of their work given that I was an outsider, a researcher who might well have been concerned with evaluating them. It was an interesting feature of the managers' accounts that they seemed to assume that their behaviour would be called into question; they were clearly concerned with their evaluation in their talk with me.

"unlike the farmer or craftsman, the manager always remains in some way the school boy who is being judged on his performance" Maccoby (1976)

It seemed to me that this talk was not just about the adequacy of versions, but also their adequacy as managers. Certainly the accounting for their work did seem to be a serious activity for the managers and not just a matter of constructing any old telling. This suggests that the managers might be concerned to protect their identity in various situations. Thus I saw DB in almost every meeting he attended, required to account for what he did; to his customers, his own team, to other managers and to his seniors. The tradition of the manager's role may well lead him to give a well designed impression, presenting himself in a favourable light. Being a successful manager is about being able to work up and account for their own preferred view, to give adequate reasons for their actions.

Thus I contend that this accounting for what they did was abstractable as "materials" employed in getting the work done on occasions where some insight into what they do is required to make sense of the "just what" of their activity; situations where doing accounting appears as a "social episode" in its own right. This might be found to be important to such activities as planning, decision-making or negotiation where establishing or re-establishing "what has happened," "what should have happened" or "will happen" can be important.

The "espoused logic's," as we might call the managers' conceptions of their work were resources from which members as well as social scientists could construct a reading of their lives. This observation I took as further licence to take seriously my talk with them. When I had tried to offer a 'reading' of their lives based on observation and discussion it had proved problematic for there was an endless combination of detail gleaned from their daily life; and what was essential or irrelevant to my making sense of the managers' work was not clear.

Kotter (1982) places some value on the managers' accounts of what they do. In telling about the world as they do the managers are telling about themselves. In seeing the world "that way" the manager is open to possible findings that "he is that kind of person who sees the world that kind of way." Though it offers stimulating new insights, Kotter's approach is to accord the managers' accounts with an ability to represent reality, to assume that what they say about their intentions and motives can be used to explain their

behaviour. Further it is to build a model premised on the unexplicated commonsense knowledge of management held by the researcher. It is to assume that non-members can share the same understandings. I was cautious, did Kotter or for that matter I, understand the management world as they, the managers did?

Such a study as Part 2 proposes would offer a way to take up Kotter's recommendation to pay attention to what managers have to say but in a way which remains adequate at the level of social interaction. It is to be interested in things which ethnomethodology has not thus far been overly interested in.⁸ That is to explore how one might study the managers' experience and even, perhaps, how taken for granted meanings are shaped into 'a line of regard'. It is to use the managers' interpretations of their world to develop our understandings.

A long recognised problem for ethnography has been adequate description, how what Geertz calls "truth as the native sees it" is to be captured. I was sensitive to a point made by Sharrock and Anderson (1982/3). They see traditional ethnography as letting one say

"what the devil the native is up to" but importantly they suggest this is
"from the point of view of the system as seen by the ethnographer." pg 124

Following their analysis proceeds on the principle that what I, as researcher, and the manager understand to be going on is a matter to be worked out between us. To paraphrase Sharrock & Anderson (1982/3) the notion of a shared set of meanings and understandings is not a 'relied upon matter' but instead becomes the point of analysis. Thus I do not see the manager as some kind of "cultural dope" rather as a participant who must also enquire as to the sense of events? Just what an adequate account of management consists in is something to be discovered together. In fact this finds "meaning to be socially accomplished and collaboratively achieved."⁹

As Sharrock & Anderson find the managers are 'interpretative actors' and as such they are capable of regarding their own actions as objects of investigation. What I saw as potentially interesting then was to look at the methods the members use to resolve the 'contingency of meaning', as they discover with me just what they do. If meaning is a socially accomplished phenomena could it not be explored given the correct analytical approach?

This is not to suggest these accounts could be treated as evidence of underlying intentions, objectives and beliefs on the managers' behalf.¹⁰ Though, as Hales (1986) comments, prior studies that have been concerned to develop an understanding of management processes, have tended to view managerial belief and ideology as inextricable from management work (Silverman and Jones 1976) or "as managerial work in toto" (Fletcher, 1973; Gowler and Legge 1983). These are in the main deconstructionist accounts, concerned with a view of action that sees it as having some

deeper meaning. My interest was in a more loosely coupled sense of how things are, that the managers' accounts of their work were exhibiting a "good sense," and that if one was sensitive to the managers' understandings of what they were doing one might elicit something of the taken for granted knowledge that informs the natural organisation of their work.

Given that Part 1 recognises accounts as irredeemably indexical and reflexive, some may object to this expository work, for if "members" recourse to particular arrays of categories is situation specific, what use is there in analysing them since they cannot represent a standard set? But is this not to be too demanding of this kind of expository work? It seems to me that provided the claim one makes for this kind of work is in line with the status afforded it (in this case a particular manager's verbal depiction of his work) and the results adhere to this analytic interest, that is how an understanding of management work is put together in the particular; then this type of analysis is of value. It's value lies in rendering accessible something of the ways in which managers map out their lives and preferences. Such work is strengthened by an adequate analytical approach; an approach which is sensitive to the work a particular manager must do to select, organise and accomplish just the particular account he is offering. That recognises that these are accounts given in the situation of an interview with me, an outsider and which does not wrench the constructions/categories the managers employ out of context in order to describe them.

The status of accounts

The discussion of Part 2 will turn on the examination of the interview data as accounts of managerial work. A review of the literature exploring the analytic status of accounts reveals a position which is by no means unproblematic.¹¹ One of the main issues behind sociology's interest in accounts has been concerned with their relationship to reality.

Generally speaking two positions have developed in the literature; that people's own accounts of why they act, although fallible, guides an explanation of social action, that they offer a principled representation of what's going on. This is the kind of view taken by management theorists such as Kotter. The other is that accounts are inextricably occasioned, that one cannot hope to gain anything from them of wider interest.¹²

Exploring the debates within the sociological community as to the status of accounts, consideration of the different methodological approaches left me of the opinion that the problem lay in the attempted rapprochement of the different perspectives when in fact their differences were explained by the fact that they were interested in different things¹³. It is this confusion that leads me to spell out in advance a set of arguments for the use of

accounts, not as a means through which to explore social reality, but as a means to show how the understandings the managers reveal are the outcome of their interpretative activities. In talking to me about their work the managers had to deal with the fact that the unfolding character of their actions was not available to me. I had invited them to paint a picture of their work and they must of necessity reveal features of this. How the managers do this, the way they collapse their actions could be interesting, revealing how they shape up a telling. The interest is in understanding how managers select and organise the descriptive categories and characterisations as resources for accomplishing an adequate explanation of their work. The topic becomes the methods that managers use to resolve the practical problem of making sense, to resolve the contingency of meaning.

This is ethnomethodological reasoning, to treat the accounts as practical activities, as topics of empirical study, and it disassociates/ distinguishes my study from those concerned with importing motive (Bruce and Wallis 1986), or relying on analysts' interpretative practices (Potter and Mulkay 1985). It is interested in how members' own understandings of their activities (explored as practical accomplishments) might provide a means for eliciting a sense of managerial work.

This raises the question, how could I attend to the 'consciousness' of each individual manager; how he and he alone gives meaning to his social world whilst staying faithful to the ethnomethodological endeavour?¹⁴ In interviewing I discovered the managers' "members knowledge" to be an occasioned action, occasioned by me as researcher, outside of the occasion of doing. In other words my enquiry requires the managers to make sense of what they do, not as they do it but at some other time. Psathas (1979) suggests that Garfinkel and more generally other ethnomethodologists treat knowledge within the natural attitude as that which is "known by members on the occasion of their 'doing', therefore analysis of what the activity consists of is adequate for the practical purpose of revealing what is in their minds. This was a conception of knowledge I held to in Part 1.

'Background understandings'

Garfinkel (1967) points us to the often unseen, taken for granted practices by which we as members of society make sense of rules and prescriptions. He recognises a background set of assumptions underpinning social action. He talks of jurors following "commonsense models". He offers us an account of jurors decision making which suggests that they consult the consistency of alternative claims made by persons to their commonsense models; "if the interpretation makes good sense, then that's what happened". So it could be for the managers, if what happened in their real daily world corresponds with their commonsense models then something like 'a line of regard' might emerge which the managers can deploy to in making sense of particular events.

However, Garfinkel has not been interested to explore the properties of these background understandings. This is not an omission on his part, they are he says retained in 'unrecorded fashion'. It was my contention that in the occasions of "talk about their work" something of the managers "background understandings" could be rendered accessible by the managers' studied concern with making sense of their work, providing one recognised their situatedness. Indeed one can only accord these formulations provisional status, by virtue of their dependence upon the context of their accomplishment. On an initial inspection the managers' recourse to them was not uniform, but clearly worked up for the particular circumstances and thus subject to a unique formulation.

This did not mean one could not attend to the possibility of these logic's, prescriptions etc having a "hard kernel of meaning," Ullman (1957), making them potentially stable across situations of usage. The managers in their accounts relied upon features in their world to understand and account for what they did. Could not the manner in which the managers defer to and shape up a telling make visible their 'common sense models'?

Lynch in his study of scientific work reveals that in research reports certain formal characterisations arise, different than those governing conditions of actual scientific practice. Lynch's interest in characterising the work of science does not suggest that the methods' reports distorted the nature of lab work; rather he suggests they are designed to reflect only parts of it, to act as a 'gloss'. So it might be that these accounts point up some "minimal adequacies" of management work.

Reading Garfinkels (1986) collection of Studies of Work, in particular the paper by Baccus, I began to wonder if the managers characterisations and 'descriptors' offered something of an unseen aspect of management. That is to suggest that they are not identical with the phenomena of management but signs in much the same way that omens show what is afoot behind mundane reality. This I think deserves some further explanation. It is a 'hunch', as yet far from substantiated, that the formulations the managers deploy to in talking about their work were in their essential form. They did not themselves reference observable elements of a social production of management, nor were they designed to. Just as it remains only the "omen" that is ever seen, could it not be that these formulations of management exist as representative of daily practices of management?

Finding an appropriate conceptual term to describe these formulations remains problematic, in choosing to refer to them as offering something like a 'line of regard', a 'set of espoused logic's' I recognise that this failed to emphasise the fact that these depictrors were selected for the particular occasion of usage, the particular individuals preferred ways of characterising management. What it did emphasise was the individual

method of reasoning, the understanding and knowledge that the managers had taken upon themselves and voiced on these particular occasions of talk.¹⁵

The logic's the managers espouse are not seen as exhaustive, but as pointing to a set of principles which for the managers offer a normative framework to make sense of their work possibly contingent upon the individual; their biography, context, experiences and relevance's.

I make no claim for the "espoused logic's" as guides to action, merely "personal understandings" the managers orientate to in their telling. If they are meant as a collection of guides to action they will require considerable 'judgemental work' (Garfinkel, Bittner) to link to specific circumstances. They were in a sense a running index of management, continuously updated, a collection of implicit understanding as to what was happening in their daily work.

This points to the operation of preference¹⁶. Preference in the way activities are accounted for and explanation offered. Even perhaps a preference for the interpretation of their activities. A concern on the managers part for which descriptors of management are "adequate" to provide an "appropriate account of management" for a researcher. The notion of 'preference' is also useful for providing a sense of these depictrors of management being invoked not in the manner of rules, but more as individuals' logic's. The form of these had at times a more specific and stronger force as guides to action, recipes of action. The mode varies from guidelines and individual rationales to having more the character of rules about them; seeming to offer prescriptions of the kind "this is what you have to do," suggesting a minimal use of discretion in the way one should conduct the work. It seemed to me that in studying both these preferences and prescriptions one could not help but learn something of the set of cultural axioms, rarely written down, that managers use to make sense of their work in this position, in this company.¹⁷

The source of preferences.

I wish to spend a little time on the issue of the managers exhibiting a preference for the resources that they draw upon with regard to the production and evaluation of their lives. It is to make available an analytic point that intrigued me during the research. A question that initially concerned me was how did the managers come to know the set of preferences we see orientated to in the production and interpretation of their activities, how might one attain analytic purchase on such an issue?

How the managers came to hold that particular line of regard, just where the set of preferences came from proved difficult to locate. Could they have recourse to a formal set of descriptors¹⁸ from which to develop a characterisation of their work?

Something that I asked myself as I undertook the research was the extent to which the published theories of management influenced the practical theories or beliefs of the managers. They had the popular management texts on their shelves.¹⁹ They talked in what was recognisably "the appropriate jargon of the moment." They talk of "setting direction," of possessing "vision," and "caring concerns," their interests were with "quality," "service," "the customer." This left me asking were these pointing to a common vocabulary of management? Was there a coherence to these depictions?

Where did these descriptors come from, was there some identifiable source? Unlike many occupations the managers do not have recourse to a professional body which provides an officially constituted array of terminology, there is as yet no agreed to, codified or documented guides to right practices. As such the materials do not point to the managers recourse to a particular stock of descriptors.²⁰

However, there were it seemed some quite focused agencies for the transmission of preference. These included meetings with other senior managers; attendance on training and development programmes; the managers' own personal objectives and appraisals; occasions of recruitment and induction; the formal prescriptions from their Organisations revealed in such documents as mission statements, and annual reports, publications that they read.

Having observed the managers at work and from the materials of Part 1, such as the memo, it seemed such preferences might also be transferred in the naturally occurring sites of activity, where in the collaborative accomplishment of their work (written and spoken) they are exposed to someone else's preferences. For example CE and HT's discussion (Chapter 4) of "what's happening in matrix implementation" provides for an interchange of the managers' preferred understandings.

The managers were surrounded by many official documents and publications in their Organisations; job descriptions, performance management plans and these were formal accounts taken seriously by the managers. Seriously in the sense that they were retained for information and in many instances clearly reference documents. Often they weren't even filed but positioned so as to be easily accessible, typically pinned on the wall or placed in desk drawers. It could be that these official documents in some way influenced the managers' characterisation of their work offering not so much a vocabulary but an official line. For example DB was surrounded by expressions of what it was to "do it the

BA way," to be "putting people first"; an officially constituted array of descriptors from which to classify the features of their Organisation.

These potential sources of descriptors are mentioned here only as potential sources for the transmission of preferences. I had no reason to suppose that the managers passively accept institutional definitions of the situation; some in fact explicitly questioned the way they were expected to work. The managers' orientation to them was personal to each particular manager, their particular views and understandings regarding their work.

An initial exploration of the managers' accounts offered a corrective for any such ideas I had of expounding the nature and coverage of the stock of descriptors actually deferred to by the managers. A corrective too for management theorists who rely upon a homogenous vocabulary of management and array of categories.

It suggested that attempts to abstract the depictrors from the occasion of their usage or to focus on identifying an official set of preferences displayed in the accounts would mean one looses sight of the very important aspect of members' accounts, namely that they are designed to do specific work within specific settings. As Barnes summarily states

"every instance of use of a concept must in the last analysis be accounted for separately, by reference to specific, local, contingent, determinants"
(1982, pg 30 in T.S.Khun & Social Science. Macmillan.London.)

Thus even if it appears the managers employ similar descriptions, no matter how exhaustively they are stated they always require judgemental work to make sense and to link to specific circumstances. It confirms the need to explore the descriptors the managers employ in the accounts as they are accomplished in the particular context, by the particular manager, rather than to abstract any general sense of a context free vocabulary. It implies that an interest in the verbal depiction's managers offer of their work must deal with the way the managers approach the usage of a particular characterisation; informed not just by differing views, understandings and axioms but different preferences as to the "hearings" particular depictrors will reveal.

Assuming then the choice of descriptors is not fortuitous but is intended to achieve some project one might consider what that might be; what the choice of such descriptor may be seen to achieve? What in the employment of this descriptor the managers are orientating to? (The notion of "orientation" employed to describe the manner in which the managers actually selected these preferences to account for their work.)

Jones (1983) suggests it is not only in the language that one finds an array of descriptors; the architecture and dress of members can also stand as descriptors. It occurred to me that these could be resources in terms of which the managers might express a distinctive identity, a symbolic appropriateness.²² It appeared their offices were regarded by the

managers as descriptors of their work. All the managers were quick to point out the size of their "office domain", the technology that they had, to tell of the numbers they managed. There was a homogeneity of dress amongst them, sober suits (typically dark grey), shirts and ties. The opportunity for individual expression was revealed only in the choice of tie, notably the most colourful feature of their dress.

I had originally been interested in outlining the settings where the interviews were conducted purely in an attempt to redress something of the balance between what I knew as participant and what the reader had access to. Now it appeared the managers could have a self conscious concern for the symbolic appropriateness of the features of their lives, in particular their offices.²² The interviews conducted on the managers' "territory" allowed access to the physical setting of their work. It struck me that these settings of their work were in a sense descriptors featuring in the public face of management, pointing perhaps to what the managers took to be the appropriate setting for the work of management. Within the delineated space of the managers' office aspects of the physical setting had the capacity to convey a sense of organisation and order amongst the artifacts of busy men.

Were then the managers' offices symbolic of the men who inhabited them? The setting of their offices could be an important feature expressing a distinctive identity, a source even of esteem. Resonating an arranged and receptive air rather like reception areas, with stylish architecture and clearly an inventory of appropriate artifacts they gave the impression of success, order and space. Interestingly they were all full of personal artifacts symbolically suggestive of personal involvement in the work, there was a touch of them in their offices. It was not just a place "to bring in the suits" (AC) but a place where as DB said they "spent many long hours."

The architecture of the offices was surprisingly similar. A dominant feature of the room is the arrangement of the table and chairs. Nearly all the managers offices showed two seating arrangements. One table was very large often filling the centre of the room, clearly not simply a desk. Usually with about eight chairs arranged around it at equal intervals, all facing the centre of the table, its bareness made it like a conference table. It was clearly designed for people to sit around so that they could engage each other across its space. The other was a smaller table, the desk, with two chairs of differing sizes facing each other on either side. The desks full of trays of paper, books, VDU screen etc looked the centre of operations. The rooms themselves were large, light and clean. All contained bookcases and filing cabinets of great size. The offices were personalised.

It seemed the setting of their work offered a material expression of their individuality and their position, readily setting the managers apart from their staff, locating them immediately within recognisably separate places of work.

So to summarise the thrust of the research became directed to developing an analytic approach to accounts from which it was possible to;

a) Reveal something of the features of management life as understood by the managers themselves. Put more specifically, a concern to explicate the preferences and orientations that inform selected accounts of managerial work. It is an interest not dissimilar to that of Spencer & McAuley's (1980) attempt to gain an understanding of some of the "universe of meanings" preferred by senior managers, the "formulations," the "preferred characterisations," the "commonsense theories" they devise and use in order to offer an "adequate" account of managerial work. It is to move on from Spencer and McAuley's work²³ to explore the manner of the accounts construction; to explore the kinds of resources the managers employ to accomplish a telling and to do so in a way which does not claim the context free existence of these formulations. A concern to explore these, a concern which owed more to Garfinkels discussion of 'scenic practices', the practices through which members accomplish "the particularity of particular situations" and to the research of Jones (1983) whose CA/ ethnomethodological approach reveals something of the lineaments of understanding of Salvation Army members. Such concerns move away from Geertz and Spencer and McAuleys view that beginning with our own interpretations, casting description in the constructions, we imagine the managers place upon what they live through is the way to get at the sense of the world. It seemed that one could explore these first order depiction's by seeing them as constructions within the situation of account giving.

b) To look at how managers shape up and manage the collaborative process of account making, how they do "talk about management." Recognising verbal competence to be an important and routine feature of the managers' work it is to be interested in the practices of description and practical reasoning. It is to explore the work the managers must do just as any member of society must, to link a particular category to a particular set of circumstances, that is to say the work of authorising the relevance of particular descriptions.

Analytically the accounts status is less clear, but it seemed to me that provided my project attempted to do justice to the occasions studied and was not one of faulting managers' formulations nor assembling or assessing accounts for correspondence to actual events such exploratory work was an acceptable project. Such an approach would, I suggest, be in line with an objective study for it offers the opportunity to develop the technique best designed to expose the nature of the phenomena. It's not about whether I could recognise and accommodate certain facts, but how I was going to respond to those facts. It is to operationalise a methodology to cope with unfolding discoveries. An interest in developing a principled approach that allows the managers' accounts to be "seen" from an

angle of vision appropriate to an ethnomethodological approach and which faces up to the the serious objections which ethnomethodology raises for ethnography.²⁴

Methodological initiatives

The data is, in the manner of Part 1, offered as a series of transcripts from audio recordings, and relies upon a set of similar analytic resources borrowed from CA. The result is a mode of analysis which remains sensitive to how the interaction is achieved. Under such an enquiry my questions to the managers, as participant in the interaction, become just as much a topic of analysis as the managers' replies, and the occasion of accounting becomes a practical accomplishment.

In order to reveal the development of an analytic approach to handle accounts it is necessary to attend to how I deal with the transcripts of tape recorded "materials" from the interviews²⁶. It involves a judgement of whether as a way of addressing such accounts it reveals the observable and reportable detail in a way which does not idealise the details through the device of extrinsic description. Using resources from CA is found to permit a more intensive and systematic study of the local management of the accounts, showing that particular interactive devices can be used by the managers to build their understandings of their activities in particular ways. To reiterate a point made in the introduction CA has begun to branch out and away from the analysis of simple, everyday instances of interaction, applying the basic analytical tools to more complex interactional settings eg Pinch, Clark's (1986) analysis of sales interactions. It is to take an interest in what Button (1978) and Moerman (1988) term an "ethnographic orientation" to conversational analysis, which allows examination of verbal exchanges for the cultural knowledge and organisational logic that managers can selectively use.

Such studies suggest CA is more than just a method of value in exploring structures of conversation, pointing to CA as a resource for exploring what the talk is about as well (Davis 1989.) In using the resources of CA it is hoped one might gain analytic purchase both on the accounts construction and also on the particular constructions the managers set up in order to shape up a telling. The managers "espoused logic's" were not just definitions offered over a few lines of transcript but offer points of entry, some guides to the managers preferences, their scheme of relevancies; making empirically available the locally organised logic's the managers orientated to and relied upon to make sense in this instance. CA permits a tracking of the meaning structures that led these managers to create, manipulate and align the characterisations of their world. Thus in Chapter 8 IC's concern with management of a Health authority being like managing a business leads him to make visible a sense of what he understands managing a business to be about.

The method of analysis employed develops from the work of Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson (1974) Smith (1978) and Cuff (1980) which point to a possible way to explore the anatomy of accounts not at odds with ethnomethodological interests.

Smith's (1978) work supports an interest in accounts. Employing resources from CA and discourse analysis she shows how participants' versions of their own and other's actions are reliant upon the constructions and authorisation work done within the account itself. Thus Smith looks at the construction of the category 'mental illness' within an account. Smith's analysis seeks to show how the original, "authorised version" made sense. How the conceptual scheme 'mental illness' is discoverable in the text. Smith goes on to show how the account can be dismantled to present a new & contrasting version in which the 'mental illness' no longer seems obvious and unproblematic. The account thus relies upon & treats 'mental illness' as something existing prior to it being used to categorise the particular activities under scrutiny.

What then the account constructor must offer is a hearing that all the features necessary for the definition of events as indicating "mental illness" are present. The account must detail the relevant features of the category mental illness. As Smith puts it:

"If the collection is viewed as a problem, then we have been told what the solution is. The problem presented by the account is not to find an answer to the question "what is wrong with K?" but to find that this collection of items is a proper puzzle to the solution " becoming mentally ill." pg 37

Smith's work raises the possibility that the managers in these accounts can be seen to be providing the solution to the problem "what is managerial work?" In addition it offers support for an interest in the sense making activities by which the categories the managers employ to define their work are constructed. It seemed feasible that in the process of constructing these categories the managers reveal something of the definitions they are working with; their practical reasoning as to what the criteria for assigning membership to particular categories is.

The models for "talking about management" the managers consider will reflect in part their own interests and assumptions. But they may also reflect members' sensitivity to alternative versions of management; what Cuff (1980) refers to as "determinate alternative possible accounts." How the managers deploy to these and what they consist in would be made visible revealing something of the managers sense of cultural axioms.

Thus Smith's work led me to consider that I could use the interview data to make visible some of the interpretational work the managers themselves undertake, the kind of interpretational repertoires²⁷ and interpretative methods that allow them to offer the characterisations that they do. These might be visible by the inferences they make public. Thus they reveal what for the managers can stand as representational of Senior management work.

To explore accounts as socially generated versions of events would appear valuable, for, as Heritage (1981) suggests, the frames of accountability that are orientated to and drawn upon, both in the design of actions and in the ways actions are themselves accounted for, represent "institutionalised", "normal", or "life as usual" features of the domain of action in question. This may be especially the case on this occasion where the manager talking to me understands himself to be speaking as a representative of his Organisation or profession. To fail to speak in an 'appropriate' manner would be to undermine the features of his identity as a manager. As Heritage says

"In interviews, as elsewhere in social life, how the parties are speaking is itself an accountable matter." pg 129

Presentation of the chapters

I offer three chapters each concerned with the "talk about management" a particular manager gave to me in my capacity as researcher. I take just three accounts, because they were sufficient, to point up something of the diverse characterisations of management life and because of the sheer logistics of research at such a finely focused analytical level.

The particular accounts that I attend to were chosen on a quite arbitrary basis. Playing through the audio tapes of the interviews, the first three I selected proved interesting and these form the work of Chapters 6, 7 and 8. They were interesting in that they were recognisable on a first hearing as espousing commonsense understandings of management in a number of different forms; stories, practical maxims and reportings of experience. These, where possible organise the chapters subsections.

A concern to retain these tellings as the "espoused logic's" of particular managers on particular occasions, resulted in my decision to offer the reader complete transcripts from the interviews. This has an additional benefit for it allows the reader independent access to check the status of my interpretation and to share in the process of analytic abstraction from which the theoretical concerns of the summary, Chapter 9, evolve. It was to recognise the accounts as social accomplishments of interest in their own right, to accord some visibility to the interactional competence displayed in their construction, to be sensitive to them as 'scenic practices'; the concern being to find a way to do justice to the kind of data one captures in studying managerial work and to establish a place for this kind of analysis.

In the early stages I took an interest in more than one manager's account with the hope that I might point to some thing more like a vocabulary of management in these verbal depiction's of membership. What I found was that the set of preferences the managers orientated to were particular to them. It is to suggest that research reliant upon commonsense notions of management rests upon a weak foundation.

I found it impossible to construct typologies, to code the transcripts. Even when several managers talked of what could be the same issue, what they orientated to and the context in which they said it made them almost different phenomena.

Conclusion

The concern of this chapter has been to position the up and coming analysis in the light of a number of epistemological and methodological concerns as to the status of accounts. By examining the practices through which managers' verbal depiction's of their work can be accomplished it is suggested analysis could reveal not only something of the way in which accounts are done but of the ways in which the situated activity of management; "talk about management" is accomplished. The management of an account of management work to a researcher and the management of collaborative understanding in any of the situated activities of Part 1 may well rely upon similar competencies.

It is suggested that exploring the manner of the accounts construction will shed some light on the characterisations of management work. In terms of the analysis I offer it seems in such an encounter as the interview, where the managers are especially orientated to "talk about management", that the description (by the analyst) of the way in which managers accomplish this and the description of the ways in which the managers accomplish the encounter itself amounts to the same thing. That is to say in exploring how these occasions are constructed one is exploring how particular instances of "talk about management" get done.

Notes

¹ I am not suggesting in the Schutzian sense that the managers experience could be gleaned from pure consciousness for this is to ignore the situatedness of explanation.

² see Sharrock & Button (1991) for a recent discussion of the place of the social actor in social theory.

³ The employment of "talk about management" and "talking management" I use in a manner similar to Lynch (1985), to highlight two modes of discourse, in this instance within management. "Talk about management" is a competence tied up with being able to offer descriptions and explanations of the work.

⁴ Lynch (1985) finds laboratory shop work showed a full range of ordinary conversational features, yet they were unusual in their systematic turn taking, the rule of "no gap, no overlap" did not always apply. Gaps appeared frequently, during the silent preoccupation with ongoing work, tasks that were not reliant upon the members talking to one another.

⁵ There is now a huge literature on the problem of obtaining information by interview (Briggs (1986), Brenner, Brown & Canter (1985) amongst others.) Such work expresses concerns as to the interview seen merely as a vehicle for researchers to elicit information about the researched' personality, competence, motives etc, and for seeing the talk as a means to uncover hidden messages of the interview. Briggs offers an insightful socio-linguistic appraisal of the research interview mindful of the imposition of researchers conversational forms on the respondents. He focuses on the important fact that the way in which topics are pursued by the researcher might destroy the local norms of turn taking and topicalisation as well as importantly the way the natives order their accounts. This is a concern that Button (1987) pursues, he is concerned with the way answers in interviews are interactional products of the occasion.

In the general literature little attention is paid to the interview as an interactional accomplishment, to their situated and contingent organisation, few see the activities that characterise them, such as question and answers as practical accomplishments of the parties. The exceptions being Regan (1981), Potter & Mulkay (1985), Button (1987), Heritage & Greatbatch (1991.) Although I do attend to the interactional accomplishment of these occasions of talk, my interest is not purely for the interactional dimension of this occasion as an occasion of interview, but for other work that gets done, such as story telling, agenda talk, etc.

⁶ The analytical classification of a "question" is not easy, indeed I find occasions in these interactions where utterances not on first appearances a question, serve from the managers response to have been seen as such. Thus my displays of understanding, assertions on the basis of earlier information were frequently responded to by the managers as displaying what I would like to know, or issues on which I wanted their opinion. If one thinks of a "question" in an interview being about making explicit a researcher's need for information then these utterances, though of a different form, were resulting in the achievement of a similar response; the provision of information.

⁷ In hindsight, I wondered if this was the best strategy for Sacks (Agreement notebook III, referenced by Lynch (1985) pg 271 note 21)) suggests that the work of agreement serves to close the extension and elaboration of issues under discussion

" people do not explore the sources of agreement as they do the sources of their disagreement."

Had I provoked disagreement would I have occasioned further extensions and elaboration's of the initial account, provoked an enquiry into their "everyday practical reasoning"?

⁸ There is a growing collection of empirical studies interested in cognitive phenomena; how members discern the beliefs of others Coulter (1979, 1991); how members formulate claims to knowledge, Sharrock (1974); how members determine another persons' thoughts, Sharrock & Katz (1978)

⁹ Sharrock & Anderson (1982/3 pg 133)

¹⁰ Despite the fact that Coulter (1991) explores the problem of analysing human cognition and re specifies the field from the ethnomethodological perspective.

"Individuation of events, experiences, scenes and occasions, as well as actions, utterances and other intelligibles are routinely accomplished by practical speakers for specific occasions, audiences and purposes. There are no standards or criteria for otherwise individuating 'what happened', 'what was said', 'who did what', 'when it occurred' and the rest of the possible object-complements for expressions such as: 'I just remembered...'"

Coulter, Rethinking cognitive theory. Macmillan 1983: 86

¹¹ Heritage (1981) offers an insightful summary of the views on talk and action.

¹² This latter position is reflected in the work of Potter and Mulkay (1985) who have been interested in the interpretative practices through which participants come to construct versions of their social world. They find that contradictions in the interview cannot be reconciled to give "coherent reconstructions." This they suggest shows how socially contingent particular statements are, heavily dependent on interactional and interpretative work going on in the interview. Though this lends support to the view that they cannot be used to document what is actually happening, it does not mean exploration of the accounts could not be both interesting, and valuable in terms of advancing an understanding of managerial work; rather that they require an appropriate methodological response.

¹³ Yearly (1988) amongst others has been interested in a mutually supportive rapprochement of these two positions towards accounts. But my concern was not to seek a rapprochement. The concern was not for the relationship between the accounts managers offer and the nature of actions themselves.

¹⁴ Such as, faithfulness to the phenomena, a concern with the material demonstration of situated activity & the essential indexicality and reflexivity of description. The concern becomes how one might develop an approach that handles accounts in interviews from the perspective of ethnomethodology, in such a way that the findings still have a bearing on the nature of managerial work.

¹⁵ Marshall & Stewart (1981) point to the paucity of academic work which attends to what managers think about their work, to their everyday practical reasoning. More than a decade since their research the position remains little changed.

¹⁶ The notion of "preference" is borrowed from Jones (1983)

¹⁷ Jones (1983) offers such a study, exploring aspects of Organisational life in the Salvation Army

¹⁸ Jones (1983) in his study of the Salvation Army identifies 3 main sources for the transmission of preference

(a) Formal prescriptions,

(b) Members commonsense understandings &

(c) Focused agencies for the transmission of preference.

¹⁹ Such as "The Change Makers" Cooper and Hingley , "The Business of Excellence" Peters and Waterman, & Sir Harvey-Jones "Making It Happen" .

²⁰ Despite the developments with the Charter Initiative (1988) or the work of Bevan & Hirsch (1989)

²¹ Symbols defined, following Cohen (1974) as objects, acts, concepts or linguistic formulations that stand ambiguously for a multiplicity of disparate meanings, evoke sentiment and emotions.

²² This orientation was not universally shared by the managers, some appeared to treat their position in an unstudied way. There is a body of research which concentrates on the symbolic aspect of managerial work and their contribution to the moral and political legitimation of the manager in the Organisation: Cohen (1975), Gowler & Legge (1983), Golding (1980) and Pfeffer (1979.) My interest does not go as far as theirs in suggesting the development of shared meanings.

²³ Although I reference Spencer's and McAuley's (1980) paper as instrumental in pointing up the data from the managers accounts as potentially offering an intrinsic research interest it does reveal interests somewhat removed from my own, which was much more concerned with rendering accessible the practices displayed in the managers' accounts, through which the verbal depiction of their work was accomplished. Spencer & McAuley's concern has not been with the practices by which the managers achieve a characterisation of their world, nor for exploring the occasions of accounting for their work as a pragmatic sense-making activity. Their concern was for representing management as a subculture; a subculture whose members share a set of implicit and explicit meanings acquired through innumerable communication exchanges. It is to see the managers "points of view" as another explanatory variable when my interest was to describe these managers' "points of view", to reconstruct their experience. It is to see the preferences, constructions and understandings the managers place upon their work as interesting constructs in their own right. The accounts to me were a practical activity of discovery and description particular to the manager and the understandings he has. That these may be shared as potential ways for managers to organise their understanding of the world is not something the data from accounts can empirically locate. Further, to my mind Spencer & McAuley had not sought to ground their findings empirically being more concerned to demonstrate an approach to theory building.

²⁴ Heritage and Goodwin (1990) locate the analytical perspective of CA as a means of approaching cultural anthropology. In an earlier paper Sharrock & Anderson (1982/3) offer a view re specifying ethnography suggesting that rather than seeing the native as having a privileged status they should be treated as enquirers into their own cultures, pg 120. Despite the persuasiveness of their suggestions few studies have taken what amounts to an ethnomethodological/ CA approach as their primary theoretical framework. Of those few that offer insightful studies is the work of Moerman (1988).

²⁵ It will become apparent to the reader that the approach, whilst using resources from CA, eschews any exclusive interest in fine grained sequential analysis (The manner of employment similar to that of Jones (1983), Moerman (1988), Drew (1987), Francis (1982) amongst others.) Instead it develops an interest in examining verbal exchanges, for the cultural knowledge and organisational logic that members can selectively use to accomplish various interactional encounters. It is a concern which again moves us from CA's concern with verbal exchanges in their own right to what verbal exchanges might reveal about the nature of management and how such accounts can be assembled.

²⁶ This aligns with the work of Sack's (1972, 1979) on categorisations, in particular membership categorisation devices. Sack's work, like Smith's, reveals that for analytical purposes and in real life, form

and content depend on each other. Sack's work on MCD's looks at the way descriptions and norms are applied and invoked in constructing intelligible narratives. His work on membership categorisation devices relies on cultural based content becoming visible through an exploration of how the category is put together in a particular society revealing the tacit frameworks used by members to make sensible what it is they do. It could be that the interviews display cultural particulars held by the managers, by the fact that in their tellings managers highlight some elements and not others as being relevant to their concerns.

²⁷ Smith's analysis undermines the impression that accounts can be a neutral rendering of action and instead displays a complex layered discursive structure which is responsible, in her particular study, for the apparently unproblematic classification of the girl as mentally ill.

*"Time present and time past
are perhaps both present in
time future".*

Burnt Norton T.S.Eliot

Chapter 6- DB in conversation [Logistics Business Centre Manager within a large Airline].

Following Chapter 5 which seeks to show to what extent an exploration of managers' accounts might advance our understanding of managerial work I begin an examination of selected accounts generated in the context of the research interview. I choose to focus on this particular arena of naturally occurring interaction for it is a rich source of "talk about management."

Part 1 explored the practice of management in selected 'natural settings'. It reveals the work to be guided by an insitu social order peculiar to the particular occasion under study and not by a set of distinctive occupational norms. This peculiar interest in the details of conversational practice within the confines of a selected occasion means there is little attention to the general understandings and commonsense practices the managers work with.

Although I might have left these descriptions and analyses as sufficiently interesting, reading Chapter 5 will leave the reader with the view that I do not make life so simple. I have an interest in the "actors' point of view".

In Part 1 I find "knowledge for practical purposes", that is to suggest that the managers are in the main concerned with espousing a practical logic of more specific relevance to the work at hand. It was in occasions of talking with them that I seemed to get closer to what in some general sense they understood of the activity of management.

Background

In this chapter the data (appendix vi) is from an occasion of talk with DB, a manager introduced in Chapter 3 and it comes from my first meeting with him. On listening to DB's account I was conscious that I was gaining an insight into his world. He seemed equipped with a set, albeit loose and ill defined, of understandings and logic's that made accountable his work. Not only was I seeing how he talked about his work but I learned something of the pragmatics of the world he had to operate in. In this chapter I seek to explore this, whilst suspending an interest in their possible transituationality, credibility or relation to occasions of the work's practical accomplishment.

The occasion of this "talk about management," which lasted approximately one hour, took place in DB's office; an office marked with many personal and company artifacts. A large desk against the wall was a central feature of the office, and above it was a vast pin board with slogans, photos, and papers covering it. This included a mixture of official documentation; a statement of his companies' mission, an internal phone list; an Organisational chart, and numerous official company briefing sheets and personal artifacts; photos of old colleagues, slogans and cartoons. On another wall were two white boards on which significant detail was recorded. One contained the breakdown of a specific project in terms of time scales, schedules and financial data; the other was a statement of goals for the Business Centre with target dates and progress notes. The office housed computer equipment: Epson FX100, a Phillips VDU, a printer and several filing cabinets. In the middle was a table arranged with chairs to seat eight. It gave the impression of being the office of a man busy with concerns of when and how he could manage the multiple projects that comprised his work.

The analysis is presented as something like a running commentary, the locally organised work of "talk about management" attended to by commentaries on a line by line basis.¹ Presenting it this way, I hoped, might also mean I remained sensitive to any salient relations embodied in the types of issues raised and categories invoked. In the interview DB was required to collapse his world into an account. In doing this I expected to find that he orientated to something like the 'background understandings' that he held to. These relied-upon-features of management would be a *finding* not a *principle* for my research.

For DB talking about his work centred on why he had to do things the way he did, and explanation as to why things did not work out for him in any simple linear way. In some cases time, resources, insufficient information and support did not allow him to take preferred courses of action, yet one is filled with a sense that DB accepts this as an inevitable part of management.

In reading the transcript the central image to strike me is that DB's orientation to his work was of operating amongst a plurality of interests, that for him management work is characterised as "balancing tensions", finding a path through potentially contrary demands that are placed upon him. What began to interest me was just what kind of organisation does DB find in his account making that lets him accomplish such a telling of his work?

The chapter is organised around a number of themes which seemed to me to be of special relevance to DB. These were identified on an initial working through of the transcript and offered a means to segment the talk.

Analysis

Getting started : A sense of Organisational structure.

I began the talk with the question "Can you tell me about your work within the Organisation?" Such a question makes available for DB that it is orientated to the issue of his management in relation to the Organisation. It leaves open the methods by which the account is to be worked up. For DB there is some fundamental work to be done; just how is his account to start? DB's response is to set up an account of the historical development of the Organisation, a formulation that he uses to furnish himself with a resource for characterising the features of his work.

DB sets up an account where the department he operates within is accounted for by virtue of the construction of an account of its historical development in response to "changes in the airline". DB makes available a set of resources for legitimating the way things are in his department. For DB the IM department he works in is a response to a change in the operating environment and part of the historical development of the company. A change which we subsequently find to have an inevitable influence on his work.

In the opening stage of the account DB locates his department in relation to these "changes" and formulates an account of its development; from its initial set up to its present day position at the forefront" of technology. This latter statement is anchored in terms of the criteria needed to be a successful airline; criteria which in his account DB proceeds to reveal his company as possessing. The inference is then that DB is working within a successful Organisation. These openings lines 1- 6 seem concerned not just to locate but almost to justify DB's department's very existence. Line 3, "its fairly clear" makes explicit the obviousness of DB's deduction that to have a world-wide booking system a computer department is needed. It is interesting for it assumes the closure of any concerns for the detail of the relationship between computerised systems and the airline, that no-one will contest the need for a computer system. In line 6, DB's pause leaves a space where I could take up a turn. My failure to do so displays the appropriateness of his telling and assumedly my comprehension. It leaves DB to continue his explanation.²

Finding the right words or getting the sequence right to conceptualise the change from the historical to the present situation appears difficult for DB. From Line 7, however, the increased pace of his account indicates that he has found a way to work up the telling, even perhaps a desire to hold onto the turn. DB focuses on the structure of the IT division, informing us that from the department "two chunks" have evolved. That they 'evolved' is suggestive of development as a natural metaphor. It is evocative of change as a natural process of the environment. It does not imply an imposed change but is suggestive of benign involvement.

DB's characterisation of how things have been as; "quick and dirty computer solutions for managers in an unstructured way," line 13-14, sets up the past way of operating as a contrast to present day provision of computer solutions. Line 16 extends the account by characterising the old ways of working as "skunk work," a term I heard frequently in the department to refer to working practices which resolved problems but in a minimal way. Characterising past practices in such a way builds a climate of reciprocity for the change, so that the new way of working will be seen as positive.

A noticeable feature of the transcript is the nature of my response, I employ minimal tokens of reciprocity such as "mmh", line 15. These typically arise at points where DB appears aware of the collaborative nature of this account either by pausing or a non verbal signal, such as eye contact. Pauses in DB's talk could indicate that he has reached a potential conclusion, and is potentially a place for me as recipient to take a turn at the talk. These minimal tokens do the work of displaying myself as receptive to the talk. I align myself as recipient; but my reply as a minimal response places the onus on DB to continue.³ Examination of the materials thus finds account-giving to be tied to relations of reciprocity between the parties.

DB following my minimal response continues to work up his account of the change, "about two years ago IM decided they needed to change (.) to line up themselves up with the way the airline was changing." "To line themselves up", line 17-18, suggests some requirement for departments to re-align to the airline's change. It imports an understanding that change in one part of an Organisation leads to change in others. One has a sense that DB's conception of his work is very much in terms of the spatial relationship between his department and other departments in the Organisation, lines 20-24. Thus if I am to understand his work I need to understand his departments position in the wider Organisation. Hence the recipient design such as line 23, "the airline's broken down into 14 parts by IM".

The manner in which DB opens his account is interesting, for not only does he achieve an account of Organisational change through attention to the history of his Organisation, but he locates his department in the structure and process of change. One could see these as "preliminaries", things needing to be done before other talk, concerned to provide me as recipient with background information that DB considers necessary.

Line 26, DB reformulates my query, line 25, as to whether he has autonomy over these and proceeds to offer an attempt at clarification. DB reveals that he is monitoring my talk. Here my response to his prior answer is displayed as inaccurate given that DB initiates some kind of repair. DB is not above clarifying the sense of his talk if he does not agree with the position that I have mooted. Here DB overlaps my turn, he recycles part of my turn "autonomy", and once he has established his turn subsequently repeats this.⁴

On this occasion it seems that for DB there is a significant difference between having autonomy and responsibility. My understanding of his prior account appears unacceptable, requiring correction. It reveals something of DB's understanding of autonomy by the contrastive work, line 31, that autonomy is being able to "go off" on his own.

DB's reformulation of my question produces a display of leading the discussion by displacing my display of understanding. DB opens, "I don't know as.. I'd put it that way" line 26, which is interesting for it seems sensitive to reciprocity, as if modifying my prior utterance; putting me right⁵ might not be appropriate. I had a hunch that DB was softening the re characterisation, being diplomatic.

What is interesting is the way DB sees his work in terms of the relationship of his department to the wider Organisation; to his "colleague Business Centres". Line 27 reads like a pronouncement of his formal responsibility, "I am responsible for providing the IT, the total IT service to my customers." It is prescriptive at the normative level. That it is "total IT" not just IT suggests that for him it is a significant feature of his work that he has sole responsibility.

Customer service

DB introduces the notions of "customers," line 28, as a "defined group;" line 30 this identifies them as a recognised set. The category "customer" in this instance also gives universal coverage to what in effect are single individual problems ie each of the 14 business centres. For DB the customers are a recognised set of internal departments that he services. This is part of a structurally defined area of work for DB. One has a sense of his customers being determined by the Organisational structure that he is working within, and that they have certain rights, legitimate expectations for a service, lines 22, 31. For DB his work is about being in the service business, about managing internal customers.⁶

That DB "cannot go off" on his "own", line 31, makes explicit a restrained area of decision making this is justified by his reference to what is common practice in any major corporation. It reveals his understanding that senior management work is not about doing things on one's own but that he is part of 14 other business centres. DB's reference to "linkages" seemed to give the idea of a connecting unit in a communication system, suggesting a relationship to other parts of the business.

DB sets up an assertion about management being aware of responsibilities outside of ones immediate arena. DB's account maintains a sense that his understanding of his management work is set within an understanding of the wider Organisation. The

explanation, lines 30-32, does the work of preserving the initial account (the setting up of the IT division and his responsibility for it, lines 26-28) while providing an account of his work being constrained by those associated, allied to him; "his colleague Business Centres". In line 32 DB orientates to the rationale that he should work for "the corporate good." In lines 34-38 DB sets up a tension that he faces. The customers ask for things which don't fit the corporate mission, yet in line 34 we learn DB is orientated to this corporate good.

Within the early lines of the account DB felicitously sets up the issues which make his work accountable. The tensions that his work consists in, which he goes on to divulge, are anchored in this change in department structure. DB's account reveals a depiction of management as constrained by Organisational contingencies, and in part serves to authorise the up and coming talk.

Managing the customers requirements

DB characterises work with his customers as "delicate", line 36. The account develops, lines 34-66, to espouse just what the delicate business exists in. It reflects DB's concern with such issues as resource allocation and the integrity of "colleagues" demands. This is offered as normal natural work, those any manager doing his job would find. In order to justify the claim that his work is a "delicate business" DB has actually to construct the sense of this "delicate business" in the account. This demands some quite delicate interactional work that we see displayed here.

It is the customer and corporate dichotomy that is significant. DB relies upon an understanding that customer and corporate needs may differ. Exactly why is hinted at line 35, but a more detailed understanding is available later in the account, lines 60-64. For DB the work is determining just how to manage customer requirements whilst ensuring that he also meets the corporate mission and objectives. The sense of how he does this is not available until later in the account. Here DB is setting up the difficulties he faces.

My comment, line 39-40, which attempts to sum up DB's explanation and thus to check my understanding, whilst not discredited by DB, is again only partly affiliated with, appearing more a response than a reply to my question.⁷ DB, although overlapping my talk, appears to align to it by the repeating of "with short term." This is followed by "or indeed, for example" which could suggest either a further explanation of this delicate business is up and coming, an attempt to control the direction of discussion (Boden 1984), or a form of correction of my understanding display, line 39/40. DB does not take the opportunity to return directly to my assessment or to his previous turn instead he seems to underscore a point as important,⁸ "one of the major difficulties," and possibly unrecognised by my assessment.

DB chooses to continue the narrative indicating that there is something more significant to why this is delicate work, which by an illustration he will reveal. Thus DB downgrades the importance of my formulation, balancing long term and short term strategy is not part of the set of major difficulties. The major difficulty DB faces, line 45, is revealed; "now allocating resources." This offers something like a title for the forthcoming talk and holds the turn determining that the answer he has given is not complete and needs further elaboration. My interjection, line 47 is preempted by DB. He uses my formulation to move on in the account, though the hesitations and "ah: well" suggest that affiliating with my response is not initially easy. "First of all," line 48, qualifies his "difficult task" ensuring I, as recipient, recognise that "how you manage your resources within your business centre" is but one part of the task. In addition it works to gain for DB interactional space to take up an extended turn, by virtue of suggesting a staged telling. Given that I have interjected, expressing an area of interest, this could attempt to ward off further interruption.

"How you allocate your resources" is worked up in forty or so lines as "almost the top" issue to manage. It is worked up as a series of queries or information seeking questions, each query seeming conditionally relevant to the next. DB's preference is to account for his work in part by the problems of resource allocation. What allocating resources means for DB is to be found retrospectively in the early part of the account as well as in the prospective account. Line 56, the apportioning of resources, on the surface hearable as a familiar task of management, is revealed as an activity which is of concern to DB. In the course of his telling DB makes reference to the definition of that category. It requires getting together with Business Centre managers (BCM's), General Managers (GM's) and customers, being able to see through well constructed arguments, balancing demands, monitoring customers for their legitimate demands. The general issue underpinning this particular description is the situation of the manager's dependence on both seniors in the Organisation and customers' demands. The overriding issue for DB is how to make a judgement, to manage what appear to be dichotomous tensions.

Lines 51-52, "but then you've got. we come up. these fourteen business centres come up and face into 3 managers" invokes an image of the hierarchy. During the telling DB mirrored the communication by raising both of his arms. For DB there is an issue of presenting themselves (the "we" I take to be his business centre) to higher management; the GM's. "Face into" suggests proximity and a point of articulation. It is a formulation of his relationship which DB illustrated by at that moment sketching, for me, a rough Organisational chart.

What seems more important to DB is that we see that meeting all these different groups' needs, and doing what you are "supposed to do" is a "difficult task;" because the official

line doesn't provide for every eventuality. The sense that I have of the lines is that DB is saying in reality, there is pressure to step outside of what he is "supposed to do."

The picture we have by line 60 is that DB is concerned to reveal that apportioning resources is about a responsibility that he has for the corporate good, to see through the customers well constructed arguments, monitoring them, to see if their demands are legitimate. It makes sensible the 'delicate business' DB raised earlier, line 37. The overriding issue for DB is the question of how to resolve these competing demands, line 67, to cope with "the difficult act to balance".

In lines 60-62, the difficulty is highlighted as lying with the customers⁹; that what they argue for as the "most important" case for resources is not necessarily what they really believe, "each set of customers (3.0) argues, may not necessarily believe but argues that his case is the most important (1.0)". DB appropriates his comment by suggesting that the customers provide additional arguments to suggest that their demands represent "an excellent case." Acting for the companies' interests has already been established by DB as a central requirement of his management. Thus such claims are heard as having a convincing and strong demand upon resources. The talk is organised to depict the customer as potentially answerable for his difficult task. DB rehearses how the customers make a persuasive claim, which in fact he "may not fully believe", but he does not attend to why they behave in this way. It is not until lines 335-344 that we are offered a possible cause.

What is interesting about this part of the account is how DB portrays his work of managing competing claims. It lies in seeing through the customers claims and from line 68, the use of the Business Centres. One can hear the setting up of the Business Centres as a designed feature of the Organisation which are now "more customer focused", line 71. This locates the relevance of DB's earlier concerns with the customer (lines 28,35,37) and neatly ties together the relationship between the historical development of the Business Centres and the issue of managing customers.

What DB sets up is an account of his position in the Organisation which reveals different interests, priorities, pressures amongst the various parties as to what should be done, these prove difficult to resolve in the reality of his world. For him this is what his work consists of. One has a sense that for DB management is about managing as close to the official lines as is possible, given a reality which is composed of a plurality of interests.

Resolving a "delicate business."

The extract, lines 70-99, once again locates DB's understanding of his work within an understanding of the change in the Organisations structure. The account serves to reveal a

distinguishing feature between a Business Centre and the centre of IM, that of an orientation to the customer. From line 70-71 it appears the Organisation has succeeded in achieving the desired change DB espouses and line 31, of becoming more "customer focused" though we learn that there are some tensions, lines 71 and 80, within IM and the Business Centres. One senses that as DB understands it the Business Centre, whilst solving the problem of customers, actually creates another. Part of IM are "the departments of infrastructure, tactics, strategy, data centres"; the contrastive work of lines 71-72 implies these are not "Customer focused."

DB explains that the Business Centre's relationship to the "central departments" is the same as in "any kind of company", line 76 or "large software company", line 77. We learn that a further feature of his work is to resolve and balance tensions within IM division. Over the next 20 or so lines we learn that this comes about because of "different cultures" and a plurality of interests. The tension is because the cultures of the old IM which is "almost research and development," "clashes" with the expectations of the new Business Centres which are customer orientated.

The characterisation of the Business Centres as focused on customer needs is talked of by DB as pertaining to the Business Centre type, other Business Centres in large software companies face a similar situation. It is interesting that in producing this description of the Business Centre type, DB is also producing a description of what the IM centre is not. This is achieved by virtue of contrastive work done around line 88. Thus customer concerns and the Research & Development interest of IM are understood by DB to make managing within IM difficult.

Line 84-85, "probably a bit cruel" is sensitive to the reciprocity of his up and coming characterisation of the IM's culture, softening the tone of his next comment.

It is not clear as to whom he is being cruel. It could be to the IM, or given that he is well aware that I am a researcher perhaps he recognises a certain "cruelty" in his characterisation to someone themselves operating in the university culture.

DB sets up the Research & Development and university categories as "sorta almost" the same. His rationale, characterised explicitly lines 88-91, is justified on the grounds of his knowledge, "about two years ago everyone had a degree." The category "university" is assumed by DB to tell the hearer exactly what the characteristic type is. The distinction seems to suggest that university is in contradistinction to a business. This is particularly explicit in line 94, "we are a business and had to support a business".

DB moves on in the account. He displays a concern to attend to the impact of the tension he has identified, line 71. This, by the many false starts, proves difficult to articulate. Line 97, "it is slowly being addressed", is clarified by "I think it will always exist",

hearable as a qualification to the view that tensions are disappearing. But DB does not appear comfortable with that and recycles line 96 that "its being addressed." Finally, line 99 offers a summary position statement, that they are "actually having some results. So we're beginning to tackle it (0.5)"¹⁰. DB establishes the view as a personal representation; "that seem to be. that seem to me," line 98, but does not recourse to an explanation of why he thinks they have "addressed" the tensions. I do not take the opportunity to ask why.

A practical example.

DB in response to my question line 100 offers "an example" to clarify how the "tension" manifests itself in his job. The example provides a way for DB to alert me to the nature of his work as he sees it, rather than by way of a formal description. As a descriptive reporting of the way things are it provides a warrant for his claim in a neutral manner and resolves my request, line 100, for insight into how it affects him.

DB's example is revealed, line 102, as a current concern;¹¹ developing a "case tool." DB attends to my position as a non-expert, line 103-5, by clarifying what they (IM) mean by "casetool". Line 105 "now the thing is" prefaces what is up and coming as the crux of the account, "that these things are not stand alone they have interfaces." This is indexical, though it could be heard as recognition of the interface of the case tools with other Business Centre projects, and prospectively a comment on compatibility, lines 112-115.

In lines 106-108 DB pays particular deference to the time scales of the project. This might suggest that for DB, his management tensions are a matter of getting actions timed to coincide. Line 107, "I need one now" succinctly captures the crux of DB's problem. That is, he can't wait for IM to recommend a case tool if he is to satisfy his customers demands. He highlights the fact that IM is "slowly going through," and this serves to set up a justification for the fact that he has gone off on his own. His own people "have been off and seen something they want, done some tests, said it will do," line 109-110. The issue for DB is should he wait or should he buy a case tool now?

The notion of having gone off to do "some tests" seems for DB to legitimate his consideration of "going off on his own", proposing the decision as a conclusion from external evidence. The account constructed in terms of the implications for customers and business relies upon and extends the notion of tensions & contradictions in the demands placed on him, line 114-115.

What appears significant for DB to account for is that he is being put in the position of having to consider not conforming to the official line, that this is not necessarily incompetent management nor is it necessarily bad for the business. Indeed given, lines 72

and 82, it appears meeting the customer needs is the very objective of the business centres. DB moves on to construct an account which makes non-conformity the result of a very rational and logical process, lines 118- 26. In this sequence the size of the project (£3.5 million), the different time scales, the continuity of the work are taken as significant indicators of a problem.

The line "all the bets are off" implies a wish for time to think though in fact there never is such a period of inactivity. Characterising the period with IM as "that very difficult period," DB with wonderful economy re invokes a hearing of the divergent focus of the centre of IM and the Business Centres set up some 40 or so lines earlier. There is an incommensurability due to the pace of change, line 111. The recipient is required to search back in the account to repair the indexicality. The fact that it is characterised as "that difficult period," invokes a hearing of the expected, known-about nature of the difficulty.

DB locates the nature of his work as problematic by organising his account around a set of different orientations in the division; the centre of IM and Business Centre management. When this sequence is compared with the earlier account of the potential conflict between customer and business needs, I get the sense that DB is indeed again formulating his work as not just managing a plurality of interests but as managing unresolvable yet inevitable tensions.

In lines 121-131 DB elaborates still further upon the tensions between IM, extending the characterisation of IM with a sensitivity to recipient design. In line 125, DB formulates, with some interactional difficulty, the centre of IM as "given the job of tracking", "finding a path through the IT jungle." That they are "given the job" suggests it is an ascribed role not of their initiation. The effect of the metaphors that DB employs is to imply the world of IM is a highly complex one, a consequence of the "IT jungle."

DB relies upon the discursive work of the categories that he has constructed in the opening lines of the account; customer, Business Centre, IM; in order to make sense of his telling. He uses the category tied meanings to give a logical framework to his account of tension in his work. Thus DB seems again to explain the "tensions" on the basis of the causal narrative of the historical development, and changes in the structure of the Organisation.

DB, lines 128-31, specifies the formal requirement on each business centre "to run on their own," but by the preface "supposed" he hints at "troubles", given the above characterisation of the Business Centres as dependent upon the IM centre. Once again DB orientates his account to how the officially prescribed view is not sufficient in practice to

account for his work. The reason, line 129 is "the timing" and this makes retrospective sense of his problem, line 111.

Given the stage of development of the Organisation it authorises DB's claim. DB's espoused rationale for why he has to look at case tools is located in an understanding that the "pathfinders", are not established enough to give him advice.

I attempt to characterise the work in question, line 132 & 134, as "co-ordinating or managing." DB sets up his response as an answer by repeating part of my question "it requires me," and overlapping my utterance.¹² DB's failure to select either of my two alternative categorisations suggests some problem in my contributions. His preferred orientation is that his work is to "make some judgement." Given that the position at IM means DB might have to penalise his customers, line 136 this is the justification for why DB might "take the risk and go off" on his own. The problem for DB is that he is called to account for his decisions.

It appears DB does not find it easy to articulate what he should do, for the talk is characterised by a great deal of reformulation. Lines 139-142 appear equivocal; the right to make a judgement, to "go off on his own" is reliant on DB having autonomy. DB illustrates his position where his autonomy is too little for it not to be a problem; "I haven't got total autonomy" line 139, yet perhaps enough to have the right to act; "I've gotta reasonable amount of autonomy" line 141.

In Line 147 DB reveals what his judgement consists in and this we find to consist in a decision as to whether the effort, "I'd have a lot of arguments," is worth it. The indexicality appears repaired by lines 136-137. What this effort is we see worked up as consisting in "a lot of arguments", "risks", "persuasions" etc; effort that he must personally expend.

In line 148 I ask DB "how do you personally weigh up that decision?" This question serves to reorientate DB to how he makes the decision, and pursues the topic which has previously been rather glossed. DB picks up on the question and his reply reveals an interesting account of decision making.

"Do I go it alone?"

DB accounts for how he makes the decision to "go off" on his own with a project, lines 150-185. It is articulated as consisting in both "formal approaches", lines 151 & 179 and "gut risk analysis", line 182.

In what follows DB seems to offer an account which would be viable in the management literature; such terms as "business case", "risk analysis", "course of action", "structured

analysis", "logical steps" are all recognisable in the literature. DB reveals that weighing up the decision to go off on his own begins with attention to "formal approaches." Included in this is risk analysis. The answer preface "I think you've got to start" projects the following talk as prior to something else. Interactionally it might work to allow DB an extended turn. That DB becomes "driven into" the decision suggests some inevitability, that the decision comes from findings detached from him and others. My challenge, line 148, has driven DB into a careful explication not of the facts but of the process of the decision making.¹³

The decision making process is offered as a series of operations, incremental steps.¹⁴ Completion of one stage, findings of a "solid case," leads onto the next stage. There is a sense of discovery in what DB says, achieved by the personalisation of the account to me as recipient, such lines as "then you have to..so you find out." Given that the example DB sites was a current one in his work this account making could be more than espousing a logic of project management, an opportunity to clarify just what he was doing in a particular instance of his daily work.

On a number of occasions the recipient design of DB's account became particularly explicit; one senses that this explication is almost instructional; "so you find out", "and then you have to", "so you can imagine can't you."

DB reveals his conception of a "good business case"; formal analysis was not "at the end of the day" definitive grounds for a correct decision. Line 159, "then I think you have to" sets up an additional step after the analysis of project needs which is to find out "where the centre is" and if they are in a different position; "cost out.. the implications of waiting for the centre." Given DB's references lines 81, 120, we can hear this as comment referring to the centre of IM. For DB there is a difference between the project being the best business case and it being doable.

DB makes an interesting explication of the category "project cost"; for him it includes the cost of resources to win people over, a political angle requiring him to assess whether it is practical to win people over. This for DB is not formally measurable. Thus there are two aspects to project decisions; the formal risk analysis etc and the support or legitimacy for a project involving change. The project only has "currency" when it has won over people, the people who currently control pieces of "the territory the innovation crosses" and the people who "sign the bills". Line 184 orientates to initial support, and support for a project at the end of the day. It reveals DB's understanding that those supporting the project may change their views, about nervousness on their part, that going off on your own as a manager is not simply about taking responsibility on your own, its about making those above you responsible too. It is a picture of uncertainty¹⁵ that DB must manage within.

My question, line 186, fails to attend to DB's preceding formulation, that management is not just about some formal framework. DB's reply after some hesitation, perhaps the result of my interruption, acknowledges that there is more to it than following a "formal pattern." The reality is more complex; "doesn't feel like that when you're working your way through. so much of its chunked up into little bits", line 190-1.

DB further extends this by a characterisation of life being about stumbling around, relying on accident and chance. The notion of "a good sprinkling of serendipity" is particularly distinctive, a colourful metaphor suggestive of things not being pre-plannable or expected, they just happen.

DB orientates to an understanding of management as less a matter of rules of procedure; rather the competence to understand what might fit the situation one is in. His preference is for a view of management where there are not pre-existing answers; it's something about chance and trusting the process of operating. The utterance is distinctive in the way it uses the behavioural description, "various horse trading's" which implies a period of shrewd bargaining and the decision, characterised as "to sit down and to map out." The invocation of "horse tradings" has a subtle, implied contrast with the more formal activities of lines 153-157. Line 203, I interrupt to offer a summary of the process' appearance. DB's reply gives a tentative agreement. He appears to have something further to raise but he is clearly experiencing some difficulty either in formulating it, or in responding to my utterance. After a number of rather lengthy pauses and false starts DB offers the assertion that they do actually succeed in working their way through the troubles. Though this is qualified, lines 206-210, one learns that it is not without problems; "frustration", "anger", and "restraint."

"clear sightedness?"

In response to my question, line 211-212, DB reveals a theory as to where his clear sightedness comes from, that it's about having time to think, persuading people to get involved and not himself being too technically involved. DB modifies my question; he clarifies that in reality it doesn't seem like "clear sightedness". For DB clear sightedness is only an appropriate characterisation of how things are if he is looking back on his work. For him his work does not seem clear because of the complexity; the number of "issues flapping around that constantly obscure your view." Clear sightedness is not a feature of his daily work. It is an artefact of the process of reflection upon his work; an order that can come from a retrospective assessment of what one has just done; "looking back", line 215. Line 215-6 "just to go back a minute" is interesting, it recognises the organisation of the topic in progress and marks DB's up and coming talk as referring to

his previous comment that "it doesn't feel like clear sightedness", line 214. It accounts for his departure from my question, something he recognises explicitly, line 225.

DB orientates to the fact that clarity might appear at inappropriate times, lines 220-226. It reveals management vision as untimely, as occurring with a certain air of creative disorder. The explanation in lines 226-239, prefaced with "I think" remains DB's philosophy. Its underlying theme is that not being bogged down in all the detail is "quite helpful." The summary, line 238-9, "I think it's a combination of experience and overview that isn't cluttered" could be treated by me as a closing of the topic; but my minimal receipt token is overlapped by DB. He adds a "third element", that is understanding "how you persuade people", line 242. DB invokes his personal experience to organise and qualify his account of how he avoids being "bogged down in the detail". DB's characterisation of himself as failing to understand the processes and machinations of the IT systems does not imply incompetence.

DB offers a practical theory that people will be persuaded if they are involved, and can see a personal benefit, line 244. Line 243-244, "those good things about getting people involved" suggests that the possible indexicality is repairable, orientating to some held in common conception that finds involvement to be positive. DB's management is about seeing things through other people's eyes, "what it is about people that gets them to buy into your needs." My question, line 249, requests further talk on the topic. DB's response introduces the importance of the team with the proviso, "they're difficult to manage". DB pursues this topic encouraged by my question "is building a team around you important?", line 253.

A member's theory of effectiveness

Over lines 254-276 DB espouses not just why teams are important but also the criteria for measuring his effectiveness. For DB effectiveness is displayed by the way his management team acts; how quickly initiatives are taken and acted upon, whether formal requirements of the business plan are being met.

In lines 261-266 DB accounts for what delivering the business plan is. This again appears problematic by the frequent reformulations, restarts and pauses. For DB just what effectiveness is is dependent on the amount of time one has been in the job. Thus for DB judging effectiveness is not as simple as meeting business plans. This is because of the implications of being a new manager. This opens the opportunity for DB to espouse his logic, "so you have to look at other indicators," such as managing team work, the way his initiatives are "picked up and worked on", and how "the culture is lying". For DB a healthy culture is about "more participation" about people questioning where they're going, line 274. The extract indicates how the meaning of such terms as effectiveness and

delivery are directly linked to daily concerns; to how you persuade people in meetings, how his management team is operating.

Managing the Customer

My question, line 277-8, seems to reiterate the interest of the earlier question, line 255, orientating to the value of teams for achieving the work. In DB's reply, through the preservation of "team", DB displays that a resource for this reply is my question.¹⁷ It appears though that he has not aligned directly with my question and does not really answer it. I do not correct him. The discussion over the next 100 or so lines reveals more of DB's conception of customers and his preferences in managing them.

DB has trouble opening the account moving from a personalised opening, "I do like" to "lets take a" and finally locating it within a report of his experience; "a meeting with customers." In line 281 DB is sensitive to recipient design and the indexicality of "we", his clarification "our team" is almost as indexical, though I hear it as referring to his project managers, line 282. The recipient design of the account is again revealed as DB discloses what "normal good business strategy" consists in. The "normal good business strategy" is exposed as "what this meeting is about, er what needs to be prepared before hand; and, do we have a consensus?" The characterisation "normal, good" shows a recognition by DB of a usual way of doing things. A way which is recognised as the right way. We learn something of what "reporting to customers" looks like, it's not just about giving information, its not just about an organised plan, line 298, it's about how you assess the atmosphere, line 313; about tailoring it for key players, 314; about being prepared, line 311.

Line 291 seems to announce that a good business strategy is just a foundation, management is about maximising your opportunity and this requires preparation. Failure to prepare means one "ends up with egg on ones face", an idiom which implies a self abasement.

In line 293, I assume a right to proffer a contribution. This is quite rare and here is seemingly less a request for clarification than an attempt to check my understanding thus far and to encourage an extended turn. DB's acknowledgement of my contribution is made explicit by his repetition, "almost a premeeting. absolutely", the "absolutely" a strong mark of agreement overlapping my question.

DB makes explicit the fact that articulating or "putting down" managerial skills is problematic, but in line 302, he resolves the interactional difficulty by the manner with which he organises the format of his account. The solution is to reflect upon the meeting and "try and call out things that trigger off". What follows is something like a list of

management skills. It is about preempting how customers are feeling, needing to judge how they might react.

The grounds for a correct decision or for the meeting going in DB's favour consist in his recognising whether the individuals are responding as he expected. DB prescribes an interesting strategy to manage the meeting that is to "change the wrap of things slightly", line 321, to change the presentation of information by verbal caveats.

In line 332, DB makes apparent that he relies upon an understanding that customers have interests other than the business interest. Here their career is an external influence on their behaviour in the project meeting. DB orientates to a view that in his work he cannot depend on customers reacting in rational and understandable ways to plans, they are motivated by their careers. The reality of DB's work is at the level of the individual and not in the presentation of a perfect business case.

The preface "quite honestly" line 329, may not be so much an appeal to the truth of his characterisation as a preface to a succinct point; that what drives senior managers is their careers. Managing project meetings with senior managers is made problematic because their career interests are mixed up with what's good for the company.

DB establishes that career and company interests can be different; that he must find a way to manage this. Line 335, is offered by DB as adequate to justify to me his account; "as performance management and pay is more and more related." This, lines 336- 344, is set up as another *fait accompli* in that if he is providing IT, and people are "measured" on this, then their performance is being measured by whether his department delivers the IT. Once again DB's preferred view of management is that it's not just achieved by rational logical plans. People don't look logically at the situation if they "may lose a lot of money."

DB orientates to the work of a meeting with customers being about personalities and less about technical or business concerns. The customers' interests, motivations can be traced back to the actions of various non business factors such as undue commitments to career interests, personal financial gain. This might be found to discredit their claim and retrospectively makes sensible the reason why DB claims to have a 'delicate business' to manage, line 36. We are told that DB's customers are measured and paid on delivery of IT, line 337 and that if DB can't deliver they stand to lose. What happens if, for very logical reasons, DB cannot deliver? DB adds to the picture, the customer's behaviour is not dependent upon their intelligence, nor upon logic, line 349. It's more dependent on monetary interests, line 343-4. Given DB's earlier characterisation of the IT people we can preempt the problem, line 357-8. Here, logic is symbolised as a "god" for the IT division. Prefacing line 356 it serves to authorise the assertion that the IT managers are

"naive about handling senior managers," and implies any attempt to change them will be difficult. This characterisation hints at wider implications in that DB's work also consists in work with his managers. DB does not extend the formulation here and I do not take the opportunity of the pause, line 358, to probe him. DB's reference to IT people and IM serves to recall further details from the characterisation that he had set up earlier; i.e. the delicate business of the IT and business culture, emphasising the incompatibility between IT's way of seeing things and the way the customer operates.

In line 369, DB offers a summation, "it's timing, arena and media" which seems to bound his account, seeming to close the topic by its prescriptive and conclusive nature. This closing is confirmed by the summary line, "so that's a meeting with customers." Interestingly DB moves straight on to "A meeting with staff."

Managing staff

DB espouses a logic of managing staff, a picture of having to motivate them by persuasion and influence; to "sell" the work to them. Here again DB appears sensitive to the reciprocity of his account, "A meeting with staff for example", line 371, provides a title for the up and coming talk. DB emphasises that you can't tell people what to do. He offers a prescription that to achieve a change in their behaviour he relies upon a number of strategies. DB suggests in order to change his project managers he makes the change part of their performance review; he gives them something like a vision and involves them in the change.

The example DB offers I knew to be of current concern to DB. DB wanted to introduce activity measures amongst his staff but his managers were resisting the change. The rationale for this resistance is that there was "no real bonus" from the work of putting them in place among the other staff. The imagery "build that club so I can hit them over the head with it" is evocative of productivity measures as a 'weapon of management'. This accentuates the problem DB must resolve, for it is now characterised as having a negative impact on the managers themselves. It seems DB relies upon the project managers to implement the activity measures, but if they "build it" it makes them instrumental in setting in place a management scheme which they perceive as a management control, and stresses the futility of effort on their part.

In line 375, DB raises a question, "okay erm, how do you get that across?" This serves interactionally to create an opportunity to move the talk on to specify how he resolves the dilemma. What is interesting is why I don't see the question as an invitation to respond. Does it exhibit an orientation to the institutional character of the occasion? The line "so you've gotta" organises the forthcoming talk as instructional and the question not as a question demanding a response but as an activity being reported. In offering the solution

DB relies on my understanding the terms productivity measures and performance reviews. For DB there is an implicit assumption that performance reviews are accepted by his employees. Indeed, more than that, that they are motivational. Line 378, reveals a philosophy; "you've gotta make something for them". This we learn is done by setting the productivity measures as objectives for the managers, establishing them as part of their "performance review".

In response to my question, line 384, which by virtue of the line "is it solely" might be heard as under estimating the value of DB's disclosure, DB organises the account of the team development so as to characterise it in a way which sets it up as doing other work; developing the business potential of the managers. Given lines 356-358 this is found to be important.

Over lines 385-402 DB extends his account of managing staff. DB relies on a conception that he has the right to control the meeting, to line up supporters for his own view in order to get them to solve the problem in a business like manner. The sense one has from lines 392-400 is of a stage managed meeting, the meeting already set out so as to put forward DB's view. DB's account of how he 'persuades' is conspicuous for its adroitness which borders on cunning. DB talks of his staff's greater involvement, of their influencing decisions, lines 379-383, 390, yet this is juxtaposed with a language of control, lines 392-397, 398-402. The legitimacy of this way of working rests on its ability to resolve the dichotomy between the old IT culture and the need to be business orientated. Somehow DB, being able to see both sides, acquires the right to act.

DB's preface "I genuinely believe," line 410, as in line 329 may be less an appeal to the truth, rather an assertion that marks what is up and coming as news worthy. DB's orientation is to why he should include his project managers, that "there are people better at analysis and logic" than he is.

Traditional theory on groups suggests managers build teams to undertake such tasks as defining the project, analysing work to be performed, planning for use of project resources and setting project objectives, priorities and performance standards etc. DB's orientation appears more to the work of constructing a team which will put his ideas in place. In lines 413-424, DB displays a sensitivity to how this account will be received; "it doesn't always happen so I'm trying to say that you've gotta be.. you have to be very open (.) mentally to what is gonna happen." This actually changes retrospectively what his answer turns out to be; it is something like a qualification to his account which says that for him management is not about working in a predictable environment, nor is it about following a predetermined process or plan.

Managing through the clouds

My question, line 425, orientates to whether problems of uncertainty are more apparent at senior levels in the Organisation. This leads DB to work up a formulation that regards working with those at a more senior level as having a "different dynamic."

In line 427, DB reformulates his response which opened with a titling of the talk as on the subject of "a meeting with the director" to what appears a re-orientation to his earlier account of his work with his project managers and team leaders. Subsequent lines, 432-434, make retrospective sense of DB's comments on events with his managers, as an example to illustrate his point that difficulties at the senior level are an issue of personalities, "getting to know those people and how they operate," rather than the individuals position in the hierarchy itself.

In line 432, DB seems to suggest that the physical proximity between him and his manager enables a closer relationship. DB does not take it for granted that the appearance of reality in the context of one role is necessarily the same as it is in another. It is influenced by "the strange combination of personality and experience," line 454. DB considers that it is "lucky" that he sees "eye to eye" with his direct boss.

DB warns us that the position is juxtaposed "when you go up to the director level", line 461. The "but" emphasises and makes explicit the contrast with the earlier position. Explanation of these difficulties is delivered in a disjointed manner, interspersed with pauses. DB chooses to organise the account around conceptions of the hierarchy, the distance between the senior managers and the director characterised as their operating on the "mountain tops" and illustrated by DB pointing upwards. That there is a barrier between the levels is made relevant by line 464-5 which offers the problem for DB as being unsure of "what you're gonna find".

The organisation of the account implies that a relevant issue for DB is the physical proximity of those in the hierarchy, that it affects how well he knows where "someone is coming from." DB's conception of his work is that he must operate with imperfect knowledge; even in relations with superiors he is constantly attuned to their motives.

My question, line 466, overlaps DB's talk but DB pays attention to it, marking his response with a clarification seeker, "and what?" implying some problem in receipt of the question. He uses the question to legitimate his explanation, that time spent with people becomes an issue. The amount of contact time one has is equated to being in touch, to "being in tune with the man". For DB the level of pressure one faces is related to ones level in the hierarchy. This is used, line 478, to explain why directors don't react in a standard way and to retrospectively support his explanation, line 468.

In line 480 DB seems to move to a topic which it appears is not invoked by me; that of improving his management ability. It seems that this is an issue that is of significance to DB. The attempt to unpack the formulation "management style," proves problematic for DB, "it's not so much (3.0) it's a lot to do with." DB locates it in a cognitive competence, about awareness, clarity of analysis and focusing on what is important. Line 486, "you can break it down into those three issues" seems a summary statement that could indicate a closing given that it is followed by a pause which provides an opportunity for me to take up the turn. I do not take the opportunity to take up the turn and DB offers an example, line 487. This example seems to orientate to the earlier discussion of "different dynamics" existing between different levels in the Organisation.

In formulating an explanation for why "different dynamics" exist in different groups in the Organisation DB relies on two earlier category constructions;- the customer, and individuals career expectations. DB espouses a logic that the different dynamics between the BCM's meetings and the meetings of project managers is explained by looking at where they see their career paths. For DB there is greater control over individuals if their career is dependent on just one manager. It suggests that customers, if the relationship is close enough, will offer alternative careers for the business centre managers, line 502-3. This DB offers as causing management of those individuals to be difficult.

Just What is Delivery?

DB picks up on my interest, line 506, in how individuals see their careers. DB extends his turn to focus on the issue of what "delivery" is. On an initial hearing one wonders what the connection is. It seems that DB is revealing something about how he sees his own career by a concern for just what "delivery" is expected of him. DB reveals something of a concern for what his "delivery" should consist in, an uncertainty as to what the institutional definition is. This not only reveals something of DB's preferences regarding how he is managed and evaluated but also suggests that just what his work consists in is a practical concern for him.

This instance of talk is particularly interesting because the delineation of what "delivery" consists in is not found to be a response to a researcher's question. It was DB's own concern, an interest that he raised for discussion, introduced as a "major issue for IM." What is interesting is that DB appears to use this concern for delivery as an organising principle for the account of what it could be to be seen as a "damn good business centre manager," line 551.

DB is concerned with an evaluation of what is meant by the category "delivery," in particular for whether the category excludes work which is for the wider interests of IM

or across the Business Centres rather than just for his own division Logistics. The issue for DB is should a Business Centre Manager be concerned solely with his/her customers and are they to be measured just upon this? The account is located in DB's experience, how his first three months have passed. The matter at issue is what is "okay work." Getting involved in some Management Development initiatives was, DB thought "okay because... it made a contribution to the overall team". Thus DB's theory of good management had assumed that such a contribution was sufficient to justify inclusion in "delivery". Line 524 raises the idea of there being other advantages to such involvement's; of getting known and "using that to establish networks" of BCM's to call on for help. These seemingly justify for DB his initial involvement in management development and distinguishes its value as short term. The construction does two things, it closes off a line which says 'why get involved in the first place?' and a second line of thought which is 'if once involved why not stay involved?'

The problem for DB becomes, is this work part of delivery? In lines 530-552 DB works up a concern at being told by his GM that he has "gotta" undertake management development duties. The issue is about institutional expectations not meeting his individual ones. DB suggests the requirement on him "to chair the DP" not only affects the amount of work he has but it also affects his personal expectations; "I came here to broaden my career." The explanation widens the issue since it now not only justifies his refusal to get involved but makes the fact that he has to be involved significant to his personal development.

Underlying DB's argument is a concern that his job is about running the business, that running the Business Centre is about customers not DP meetings or management development. Line 537-8, "that's been forced" indicates that for DB an issue to raise is that he is not able to control what work he must do. (This he extends by saying he is also not sure how his performance is evaluated, line 543.) There would seem to be an understanding on DB's part that work he is trying to do should have some relevance to his career. DB extends the topic into the realm of performance ratings. In so doing he develops a further set of concerns to do with being overburdened, not knowing where ones job really is, and not knowing how he will be assessed on what he currently does. The thrust of his argument seems to revolve around an inequality that allows a BCM who stays within the bounds of his job to be perceived as "a damn good BCM", line 501. The concern for DB is that he is not clear regarding what an attribution of good performance consists in because part of his work is not recognised by his performance ratings. In lines 552-554, DB makes this concern explicit.

Conclusion

DB's talk about his work provides an occasion of explanation as to what for him his work consists in. Using resources from CA we find we can empirically locate the recognised sense of this manager, DB's, talk. We find DB locates his explanation in terms of selected occasions and situated contingencies of his work.

What appears as the central preoccupation of his work is the plurality of interests that he must manage, a difference he accords to individuals occupying different positions in the Organisation and which is offered as a normal, natural aspect of managerial work. For DB his work is understood in terms of a network of spatial relationships with other groups in the Organisation and in terms of Organisational change.

Underlying the account is an understanding that different groups in the Organisation have different sets of interests. For example, in the IT centre research and development was the primary focus of their work, whereas in the Business Centres there was a different set of values concerning IT provision which was an interest in customer needs, time scales etc. The IT centre's preoccupation with R&D, and the Business Centre's with business and customer needs authorises DB's claim that his work is a "delicate business" balancing these tensions.

A hallmark of the account is DB's implicit assumption that formal expectations of his role do not necessarily provide an adequate explanation of his work. An account is set up where acting outside of the institutional prescriptions ie "going off" on his own is not incompetence or non-conformity but an essentially given the different interests that he must balance. DB organises his account around a sensitivity to the structure he works within; the different departments and individual's interests and role tensions. These are not seen by DB as peripheral to his management activity but as central to his work.

The analysis points to how DB understands his work; in terms of customer motives, support from his managers for his initiatives, attempts to instil his team with new values, and importantly, a sensitivity to what he should be doing to be a damn good business centre manager.

Talking about his work we find is a serious matter for DB, there are clearly salient issues to be raised. The account appeared as DB's individual philosophy of his work, with a personal logic, and it was interesting, for the issues DB talked of were pragmatic concerns he was facing in his daily work.

On occasions we find my response is "inadequate" for DB, he does not disattend to it but provides extended rationales, anecdote and example. Such occasions provide access to

"managerially defensible" arguments and rationales. DB shapes up the account by raising a number of questions that need to be addressed within his work. Such an approach means that DB brings to the talk in progress salient issues that he orientated to. These questions are not orientated to as questions requiring answers in the course of the talk but as themselves illustrators of DB's work.

In addition to revealing the manner in which one senior manager shapes up a telling of his work the chapter makes available something of more general utility to those interested in studying what "doing account making" consists in. It reveals something of the ways in which managers accomplish the description and explication of their activities.

In the next chapter I continue this interest in both the descriptors and logic's that a particular manager, AC, orientates to, and the practices through which such an account is accomplished. An interest too as to whether AC will orientate to a similar sense of management as DB.

Notes

¹ I sacrifice an interest in the natural organisation of talk in the interview because of an interest in the managers descriptors and conception of their work. For example I recognise that I could have developed my interest in the role of conversational features in accomplishing the work. Such features as how agreement is reached, topics negotiated, informality set up etc.

² It is a noticeable feature of all the accounts that I offer minimal response tokens, "mhm", "okay" is often all I utter. Such tokens serve to minimise my intrusion on the style and content of that which follows and invite the managers to continue the account by signifying my receipt of the prior utterance and little else. A further feature of the accounts that might be unexpected given the literature on interviews (Jefferson, 1981, 1984 amongst others) is that the managers turns are conventionally extended and typically do not offer me any response token resources. This sometimes is problematic for me and inspection of the transcripts reveals occasions where there are silences rather longer than usual, overlaps and utterances that can be characterised as interruptions. Finally there is a noticeable absence of opinion or of challenge on my part.

³ I am suggesting that I help produce the extended talk as a variation from the normal situation of a speakers right to a single turn constructional unit (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974) by withholding responses until a recognisable answer has been produced.

⁴ Schegloff (1987 pg 76) identifies this as a regular occurrence when there has been an overlap of the turn beginning with the prior turn. Why then the repetition? Does it mean that DB can move out of the overlap and make a further turn beginning while the prior speaker does not have such a facility to recycle their part of the overlap? As Schegloff remarks "new starters have a competitive advantage" in the fight for the floor which the overlap here could be indicating.

⁵ For work on the business of correction see Jefferson (1987) "On espoused and embedded corrections in conversation," in Button & Lee.

⁶ Indeed the account that follows was reminiscent of Peters and Watermans (1982) talk of closeness to the customer; customer service concerns. But the "autonomy and entrepreneurship" that Peters and Waterman suggest are characteristics of successful management and which allow individual units to be innovative is not for DB such a clear cut issue. Indeed it is an issue to raise explicitly.

⁷ Boden (1984) following Goffman (1979) in "Footings" pg 1-29 *Semiotica* :25, makes an interesting distinction between replies and responses. Replies are proposed as second pair parts that address the question posed by providing part or whole statements. Responses presented as conversational objects which, while satisfying the constraints of conditional relevance and sequential implicativeness do so by breaking the frame.

⁸ A preliminary observation was that the managers clearly had some sense of aspects of their work that were salient to these occasions of talk. It was not an occasion for idle chatter. One has a sense that they were orientating to a "line of regard" in espousing a logic for their work.

⁹ Given that a predominant feature of service cultures is that the customer is sovereign DB must give good Organisational reasons for not easily handling their demands. The characterisation of the customer as internal to the Organisation and as placing their own needs as more important than the Organisations provides a justification for DB's claim that he will not necessarily manage the customers on the terms they set out. There is a recipe for tensions; indeed it might be argued that the business centres are set up to

manage just such a tension. The gap between the views of respective groups in the Organisation thus becomes central to the moral force in DB's account of the "delicate business of managing".

¹⁰ A number of different writers; Schegloff and Sacks (1979), Jefferson (1984), Button (1991) have referred to activities which are "closing implicative". Assessments can provide a summary which might orientate to the possible conclusion of the topic-in-progress (Button 1991). I, as co-participant, orientate to this line as a possible closing, my question potentially encourages further talk on the topic. Indeed here, through the use of "so" the following lines are labelled as being a logical inference from proceeding talk and thus potentially hearable as concluding.

¹¹ I learnt in subsequent meetings that the example which DB proceeds to espouse was a particularly sensitive and topical issue for DB. DB faced what he referred to "as a disabling problem." His General Manager was concerned to standardise the IT provision throughout the Organisation; to establish computer systems throughout that were compatible. The decision, however, was "stuck at the director level" and as DB said they "have no damn conception of what that means for us on the ground." This DB makes explicit line 112. The implication was that until this decision was made it froze DB's opportunity to purchase a case tool.

¹² DB's overlapping of my question was not an uncommon occurrence in the talk with the managers. They did not appear to orientate to an expectation of multi-unit questions; "early" interjections were quite frequently exerting pressure for minimisation of the turn size (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974)

¹³ This espousal is interesting for again if one considers popular management theory, for example Peters & Waterman, we find claims that excellence comes from a bias for action and entrepreneurship. DB's account offers a different view, a far more equivocal and uncertain world. The criticism that Guest (1992) offers of the 'Excellence Literature' fails to advice on how in practice to achieve these behaviours might be significant. For DB is saying that in practice it is the implementation that is difficult.

¹⁴ I wish to note here that DB spoke of decision making as if there were reducible procedural elements to it. Observation revealed that in the course of a projects accomplishment the order of the performance of tasks was at considerable variance to this version of the decision as a series of steps. Although prescriptions such as looking at "project needs" were used as instructions for what a meeting should do they did not allow access to the detailed performance. This is not to fault DB's account but is to take notice of the 'glossing practices' and 'recognitionals' that are relied upon in the process of account making.

¹⁵ To suggest that these uncertainties are unresolvable is to make DB's inquiry into them pointless; yet to make them resolvable is to lose their very character as uncertainties by being much too certain about them.

¹⁶ Exploration of the transcript points to the frequent use of personal pronouns in working up the account; in particular "I", "we", "you". The use of "you" is particularly interesting for DB employs it not as a term of address to me, as recipient, but as a reference to what "anyone" or any manager might do. It works to present the disclosure of how he works as normal, typical, something the collectivity does. (see Watson (1987) "Interdisciplinary considerations in analysis of Proterms" in Button & Lee.)

¹⁷ Button (1987) suggests that in such a response the interviewee claims an understanding of what the question possibly means for him. Button suggests that for hearers of the answer it may display a misunderstanding of the question and thus it could be characterised as "not answering the question."

"They are playing a game, they are playing at not playing a game. If I show them I see they are, I shall break the rules and they will punish me. I must play their game, of not seeing I see the game".

R.D.Laing 1970

Chapter 7- AC in conversation [Head of the UK subsidiary of an American Bank]

This chapter continues the analytical and substantive interest in managers' accounts of their work. On this occasion the interest is in how AC, a different manager in a different company, a major international bank, chose to define the content and scope of his work.

Why, one might ask, was I interested in yet another manager's account?

On talking to the managers I found that no clear sense of what managing entails emerged naturally from their accounts; they displayed a diverse set of expressions and conceptions of membership. The way in which the managers orientated to and shaped up their work was highly individual. It seemed reasonable to assume that these differences were significant in terms of understanding how each manager made sense of his world and therefore each account could be found worthy of study. Thus, although DB has made sense of his work in terms of Organisational change, his management team and his customers there was no reason to assume AC would also, or if he did that his orientation to these 'categories' and the reason for employing them would be the same.

Further, the common-sense, practical theories one finds the managers orientated to in accounting for their work reflected the managers' ways of understanding. Indeed it could be in these terms, I supposed, that the managers make their way in daily life; solving a particular problem, managing a specific project, accomplishing some task.

Though the managers might indeed take certain meanings so much for granted that they no longer had to think about them, and in many situations of work did not have cause to provide a very clear account of them, they could nonetheless talk sensibly about their work. Chapter 6 finds that through the application of a CA informed approach a "possible reading," grounded in an exploration of the manner of the accounts accomplishment, is achieved.

That it remained an account offered to a researcher in an interview like situation is not ignored¹. Indeed the occasion of talk can be found to be an occasion of work itself; "doing accounts".

Talking with AC I was particularly aware that this talk was an occasion of talk between a manager and a researcher and that part of the talk could be indexical, whether due to the jargon employed or different bases of knowledge. This might demand of the manager attendance to just what could be taken for granted and hence left unsaid, a recipient design².

That the accounts might be designed for reciprocity by a researcher concerned me in the early days of looking at the data until it occurred to me that this in itself was interesting for it exhibited the managers' concern for the symbolic appropriateness of their telling.

On listening to AC I had a sense that I was being offered a plausible explanation of his work. Compared to DB's account, Chapter 6, which presented a picture of divergent interests and ambiguities I felt that AC might not be "coming clean." This in itself could be revealing of AC's understanding of management, that for AC management work was not to be offered as replete with tensions, for him management revealed itself as something systematic and logical?

I offer the data that supports the analysis in the form of a complete transcript (appendix vii). At times meanings evoked earlier in the account are relied upon, understanding of these being essential to the managers' subsequent tellings. As in Chapter 6 natural themes that emerged in the account inform subheadings within the chapter.

Background

A Senior Manager in a large American bank, AC was an Italian American born and educated in the USA. He had been seconded from the bank's headquarters in New York to set up and manage a division I refer to as G.C; the department of the bank that held and managed the portfolios of large corporate clients. A department which was comprised of some 400 or so staff. From speaking to people in the company it seems AC has a high profile as a young, dynamic and extrovert manager in his mid thirties. Indeed it was just this that led me to meet him.

Invited to a social event at the bank by a friend I was intrigued to discover that the man, conspicuous in a yellow and black baseball outfit, that was referred to (in jest) as a "walking example of the banks culture" was in fact the "big boss." He appeared fascinatingly different from the other senior bank manager, JB, whom I had met earlier in the course of the research. I decided subsequently to try and elicit his interest in my study. In response to my letter requesting an opportunity to discuss the research I was invited to lunch in order to talk through the research outline. During this talk it became increasingly apparent that AC had thought through what he did and that he was resistant to seeing it in any other terms, something subsequently I will locate in the analysis.

It was with AC that I made a concerted attempt to involve him in the finer details of the research proposal, but during this attempt it gradually dawned on me that these managers did not have any great concern for the intricacies of the research nor did the managers regard what it was they did in the same light. In attempting to involve them in the research I was in danger of imposing my own interests upon them and by so doing I was glossing over their knowledge of everyday life and thus failing to recognise the way in which this was used and formulated. In the case of AC this was not acceptable. I had a distinct sense that this challenge to his conventional view of his work was unwelcome.

During our first meeting AC suggested that he would be happy to talk again about his role in order to address what for him were significant features of his work. I made arrangements to return almost immediately but his work schedule was such that it was more than a month before we met again. This next meeting took place in his office, a sleek, stylish setting. Co-ordinated with black furniture and silver accessories (in the way of a few personal artifacts; a silver framed photo of his wife, a silver desk clock, and pen stand) it gave the impression of a man who attended to detail and to presentation. Listening to AC talk he seemed to be offering a prescriptive and unitary view of his management work. Now, working with the transcript, the interest becomes how to locate this analytically in the detail of the accounts interactional accomplishment.

Analysis

Structuring the meeting

It is interesting to note the attention AC paid to setting up a temporal frame around the meeting, line 4. Given that we know managers to be busy people with competing demands on their time this was not unexpected. How managers accomplish this interactionally given the obligation of seeing a task through and in an affable manner is a little researched area. Here we have a nice illustration of one such managers' methods. AC sets up, at the outset of the meeting the parameters for its initiation and termination. He reveals a potentiality to manipulate the structure of the interaction by a few minutes of talk at the onset of the meeting, lines 4-6. That is not to say that it necessarily bounds the experience, controls the temporal situation; but it sets up some framework for the talk, making explicit some preferred closing even before it begins! It reveals AC's attempt to construct and order the interaction; in effect to manage me. For AC it was assumed legitimate that he should control and define the occasion.

A road map

For AC accounting for what he did was facilitated by reliance on a formal document he had constructed, appendix (viii). It was a document he characterised as revealing the

details of what he spends his time on. Just as DB relied upon a historical account to frame his telling AC uses an Organisational document as a platform from which he can construct a picture of his work. For that reason it is included; it is a resource for the generation of topics we see within the talk. This document had not been drawn up for me, AC offered it as constructed for "his boss in order to find a (his) replacement," as a means for "getting a feel" for what "they'll (the replacement) be doing". Such an instructional document is a phenomena of his work in its own right; but what interested me was that this could be used to talk with a researcher.

In lines 13-14 AC offers a brief summary, breakdown of his work as a list which came from the document in front of him, the memo for his boss. This gloss leads one to expect more revealing description to follow. Line 13, "I break it down into (clears throat)" marks the transition into the account proper and announces that he is doing; "breaking down" his work. The throat clearing preserves the possibility of continuing, holds the turn and perhaps gains attention.

AC's preferred categorisation of his work was divided into four areas: day to day management, project management, business strategy and systems development. It offered an opening account of his work in the manner of a summary statement. AC seemed to be offering something rather like the conventional perspective of managing a business. Line 16, AC orientates to the potential indexicality of each category and explains what "day to day management" includes. This consisted in such activities as "looking at the status of projects", "the production", "the service", "reviewing standards, getting the problems fixed" and the concerns of a service business to meet customer standards. Over this stretch of talk AC increases the pace of his talk which could signal not just a comfortableness with formulating that talk but a concern to hold on to the turn. Only when he is well into the explanation does the pace drop. Interestingly much of AC's speech had this quality about it, what Schegloff (1981) refers to as a "rush through."

The characterisation which AC offers as "day to day management" does not correspond with how his work would appear to an observer. My question, lines 26-27 directs him to this and results, after some misalignment, in an account which provides a picture of how each of the components of day to day management listed in the memo i.e. product issues, team work co-ordination, monitor projects etc fall on his desk. Over lines 32-54 AC's turns are built around his document. Prefatory statements such as "Okay. production issues and backlog monitoring," line 32, come from the document and establish a context for a subsequent explanation. This works interactionally to imply that further talk upon this topic is up and coming, lines 38, 40, 44 and 49. The "right", line 32, with which AC begins appears regularly in the account when a new topic is being introduced and appears to mark a wish to take up the turn.³

In lines 42, 58 and 67, AC formulates the gist of his account "so a lot of it's follow up" and this enables us retrospectively to explicate the meaning of "follow up". In line 58 the silence of 6 seconds is exceptionally long. Such an extended pause could be taken by me to indicate a completed turn and responded to as such. Here response is withheld and this appears to push AC into a continued explanation. An explanation which could be recognised as an unpacking of follow up; "I'm very concerned that the staff is OK that morale remains high, that the direction that's been set has been communicated very clearly...I follow up on a day to day basis", lines 58-61. In line 62 AC makes available the fact that his follow up "is not everyday on the same project" but is at least once a week.

Line 67, "so its a follow up" and line 69, "it's an enormous follow up after the directions been set," have the characteristics of a closing, offering a gloss of prior explanations. My query line 70 retrospectively gives it the character of a closing, "and the directions set above you?" for by its interjection it influences the extended talk and potentially moves the topic on. AC partially affiliates with it, overlapping my continued utterance with "uhm depends". In lines 73-77 AC informs us that "setting direction" is for him about being given a "very general direction". Line 76 implies that this is a minimal amount of information, "I'll just be told". The invoking of an example is an attempt to unveil how it is. For AC this means "figuring out ..the service" required to provide "more processing power".

In line 79, the "Okay" holds on to his turn at a point where there is a possible turn transition, possibly orientating to my interruption and my "translate it". AC moves to a new topic, what in fact is the next line on the document in front of us, "project management"; and I do not attempt to stop him. What is not clear is whether he takes my interruption, line 78, as a prompt to move on.

For AC project management, indeed all his work is "just an enormous set of meetings", line 84. This summary statement has the character of a topic-closing; indeed it could almost exhibit a closing of the topic of our talk which was to explore what it is that he does. The silences confirm this completion, lines 84 and 86. My minimal response, line 85 does not on this occasion lead AC to extend his account. With some force he offers a further closing and allows silence to ensue. I take up the silence, line 87, but not to clarify or to attend to any lack of fit of his answer to my question, instead I proffer a question: "What made you draw up that document?" which moves to a new topic.

AC suggests there was an Organisational purpose for which the document was generated; to find his replacement. Lines 89-94, tells us something of AC's perception of his own competence; that what he does is what should be done by a manager in his position. In line 90 AC orientates to his current job in terms of career progression and a view that part of promotion at his level involves the finding of a replacement. AC offers a view of his

career; "progress and go up the ladder" which through the metaphor evokes images of ascending. But the implication is that this is morally implicated on it being good for the Organisation too; on his having found a replacement.

It is interesting that for AC "what he did" had actually become an object of study within his work. The resulting document (appendix viii) was informed with a sense of the work not as indefinitely extensive courses of work, but as defined by reference to titles for classes of actions; "day to day" and the sequence of actions that comprised it; "backlog monitoring", "team work co-ordination." What these consisted in AC took to be understood both by those in the Organisation receiving the document and by me. Thus for AC what he does becomes visible in the recognisability of what "continue to establish", "communicate direction", "follow up" consisted in. For AC these are a legitimate set of descriptors for the categorisation of his activities and experience. Line 92, that it is a "road map" appears sensitive to its representational nature and its character as pointing to the salient features of his work.

The document in effect sets up for AC a framework to organise this account, it makes relevant certain features of management work important to doing his job. At times the account is offered in something of a mechanical manner such as lines 97-100. Here AC is in fact just reading the document to me, simultaneously crossing names of individuals and specific projects from the memo in response to my request for a copy of it.

Lines 106-108, "so my whole function is establish direction... end of story. I do nothing else for a living" offers a position statement; it occasions an instant fixing or reading of the formulation thus far. I suggest in addition to checking the sense made thus far in the talk such statements make available an opportunity for closing a particular part of the telling. It is one of the ways in which the talk is managed, it contains the topic within the bounds AC sets up. This topic closing is made quite explicit by line 107, "end of story. I do nothing else for a living."⁴ There is a sense that for AC the talk could happily end here. This derives from his reticence to say more.

In line 109-110, my query⁵ retains an interest in the prior topic that AC has so clearly wished to move off and questions whether "establishing" is not ongoing. For AC this is problematic. He does not reintroduce what he does nor offer further explanation, but closes it abruptly; "as the need arises. I don't make up things to establish, Right?", line 111. The "Right?" requests my acceptance and reinforces his concern to close the topic in an almost confrontational way. This neatly succeeds in closing the enquiry. That AC gets his formulation confirmed might curtail further queries from the recipient which could jeopardise the "sense of the talk thus far."⁶ To question the sense of what AC was saying might question his competence to talk about what he does; it may challenge his own understanding and more importantly, one senses, may jeopardise the interaction.

The tone of the response suggests irritation and characterises the question as inappropriate. In line 112, my question is sequentially implicative on AC's prior response; it accepts that AC establishes things only when there is a need but its orientation, instead of closing the account, works to display a request for more detail. AC finds the request unproblematic, line 113; he asserts his understanding and possibly his willingness to deal with it by the recognitional device "okay".

In his reply AC refers to the procedure he has recounted before, by abiding to a formula AC portrays himself as likely to produce certain outcomes as intended results, there is a sense of logical actions. We can thus hear AC as confirming his break down of what it is he does in a way which connects episodes of social interaction in an orderly manner.

Around line 114, "this one I'll just cross out," it seems AC's attention returns to his use of the document on his desk to display to someone outside of the Organisation what the work entails. His attention to it as documenting his work once again becomes one which displays a concern for the confidentiality of the data, for ways of ensuring its anonymity.

Having crossed out the name of a particular project on the document AC continues his exposition from the memo. He characterises the work of project management as following a pattern; "the sequence under the project's the same", line 118-119. It is a different conception from that offered by DB, Chapter 6. DB's explication revealed it as an uncertain, serendipitous course of action. For AC it appears an organised and coherent course of action. He reveals a conscious concern for the visibility of 'project management', in posing himself a question, line 124. This allows AC to move his explanation on within his turn; it works to extend his turn. This device was interesting. In ordinary conversation topic change is often interactionally dependent on the recipient. This formulation was not just a way to maintain speaker rights it also excluded me from management of the talk and allowed him to move to the next section of the document.

In lines 126-7 AC ties the telling to the circumstantial visibility of the work, to how one might be able to identify these activities he talks of in the practical accomplishment of the work. That establishing direction "would be tough to identify" is recipient designed. It reflects the orientation of his account to my interest (line 26) in whether the memo's depiction of his work could be identified by someone shadowing him.

In line 128 the characterisation or gloss of "moniter results and moniter growth" as a process of "tracking" is ambiguous, and interestingly it is the same metaphor as DB employed, Chapter 6. Metaphorically it offers a conception of finding clues, a suggestion of competence in knowing the path of actions and the signs to look for. AC continues the disclosure of what this "tracking" consists in, but in doing so he does not offer it as

referring to his own way of working but by the invocation of "you" sets up a hearing that is prescriptive. Following Sacks we can note the potential ambiguity of the personal pronoun "you" employed here, that it can potentially be used to indicate "anyone", "people" and such like, or it can be found to be an address term. Its placement here brings that ambiguity, if the "you" is heard as an address term then this occasion may be heard as "instructing." From line 136, and his inspection of the memo, AC's talk is found to refer to his division's way of working by the personal pronouns "our" and "we." This could be heard as standing in the same relationship as "you" so far as the work activity being done, referencing "people in general", but it is found by virtue of the possessive pronoun, "our unit costs" to tacitly reference the work of his division. The sense of these lines is less instructive; a more personal explanation.

In this part of the account AC locates the work he does within an official, formally prescribed course of action, invoking the recognitional associated with conventional business administration, such as the business plan. Premised in AC's usage of this framework to account for his work is my ability to repair the indexicality of these "bullet points", line 122, and acceptance of the inherent co-ordination and sequential unity of these steps. "Right", line 135, displays that the account of "project management" is complete, and also pivots to the start of a new topic, the next section of the document; Business Strategy. Here the turn is organised so that we orientate to detail in the document. Once again the indexicality of the utterance makes analysis difficult.

Line 145, AC overlaps my formulation, lines 143-144, and my clarification attempt. However, I persist with my query. AC offers a minimal token of recognition of the query, but given that his ensuing response does not align directly it is not heard as an answer. That it derives from my question is apparent in the recycling of "prioritise" but it is not an answer and I do not take the opportunity to clear up the misunderstanding. AC could be heard as evading the question⁷ or as not having understood it.

AC works up a description of how he prioritises his work, referring to the document. The items within the document are listed in order of priority and AC reads them aloud.

In line 154, AC makes explicit the potential fallibility of the information in the memo that he is talking around; "the biggest assumption ... that the business strategy has been set." As this document is being used as a resource for telling what he does, such a statement implicates the account. If the business strategy is not set then the validity of his account is questionable. As such AC authorises his next topic which is to engage in a practical enquiry into the setting of the "business strategy". Thus AC persuades the hearer to attend to his next topic by offering it as some sort of account to resolve the reality disjuncture between the memo's assumptions and how things really are. Co-incidentally or perhaps by design we find Business Strategy on the document. For AC this topic of setting

business strategy is a preferred subject. Interactionally he has the opportunity to move to this.

Setting business strategy

Line 154 seems to change the definition of management which has been orientated to in the earlier part of the account. No longer are Organisational contingencies objective, extrinsic influences on his work; they are re characterised as something more fluid; as "assumptions".

In line 160, AC orientates to a different role which he holds within the Organisation; a member of the senior management team. This establishes the task of "setting business strategy" as in some way apart from the earlier explication of what he does. What follows is the practical logic underlying the setting of objectives. It is a rational construction not unlike the verbalisation of a decision tree. The clear orientation to financial results objectifies what is important; eg profit, line 161. AC resolves the problem of explanation by setting up a series of questions, set up as those he would ask in his actual work. Interactionally the employment of questions or queries posed to himself within the talk works to establish a right to attend to a particular issue/ topic.

The account relies upon 'symbolic classifications' recognisable within business ie expense and revenue, profit and loss etc. It serves here to generate an objective purpose which AC can be seen as orientating to, reducing events to a common denominator ie money and percentages. In terms of accounting for what he does it is in keeping with notions of managerial work as recognitionals associated with business activity. AC's account implies that figures which feature in the decision making at the senior management level are a simple and easily available, assessment of "how things are going."

In lines 180-183 AC reveals the significance of the industry standards for his evaluation of achievement, "generally in banking if you can reach a 20 % return you've done well; if you can reach 25 and over you have an excellent business." AC provides us with a standard to make retrospective sense of line 176 and he is found to manage an excellent business; "last year we did a 25% return, next year we want a 32% return."

In AC's account one has a sense that the figures were representative of the work, against which measurements of value and achievement could be made. That these were based upon a series of assumptions, that then become quantified and worked towards is not raised as a problem by AC though observation revealed that frequently within the daily accomplishment this process as a performed course of action was not as trouble free. AC offered the account as a series of "how-to" recipes, as a series of sequential steps, as such it has the character of a prescriptive account of typified sequential actions.

In lines 190-195, AC underlines the impact of particular times in the calendar on the work that he is involved in; that at different times in the year he will have different concerns. This is a sensitivity again to the visibility of his work continued in line 207. We learn that his involvement in the business strategy is "only really solid for one or two months" and "its on and off," visible in "a few memos and two trips to New York".

In lines 212 -215, AC invokes an image of his "piece" as but a part of the business plan; it also consists in the systems delivery, marketing and sales plan. Unlike DB, AC does not attend in any detail to the interrelationship between the parts, that is the work of his boss. That AC "is only one part" makes sensible line 198.

In response to my question, line 218, which asks what happens "if that end goal is unrealistic" AC says he has autonomy to say that "it cannot be done," line 219. It reveals that revision of the targets is an unproblematic event, "I just say cannot be done". In line 222 AC suggests it is an actual event, "and that's what I did say." Line 225 reveals a proviso that it is "authorised", that is supported with figures. For AC to say that an increase of 10% in expenses leads to a revenue increase of 32%, is not enough, he must "break it down" because he has "to be quantitative all the time." This understanding that AC has to be quantitative is revealing of the culture he manages in; for him it's about making visible in figures what he's aiming at. Just what being quantitative actually entails is not available in the account though we sense it refers to a need to support requests with a financial breakdown, typically in terms of costs, benefits, profits and revenues.

AC increases the pace of his talk indicating confidence in delivery, lines 224-238. Though lines 227-228 imply that for AC getting a business plan is unproblematic, what emerges from that plan is his budget, that he "must stay within that budget" orientates to the budget as a constraint.

Line 233 "now I go back ..." refers both to his orientation bodily to the memo and to his return back to concerns of managing his own division. It serves as a locatory device, it orientates to AC's primary role as managing projects, the role which is documented by the memo. The indexicality of lines 233-37 as a series of references to the "bullet points" on the memo seems unproblematic for AC. It orientates to me, the recipient of his "talk," as in the position to make sense of the memo and those terms associated with each project. The "but" line 242, hints at a qualification or contrast to prior talk. Line 243 reveals AC's understanding that his work is not completely quantitative, its not just achieving the official business plan or staying within budget; it's additional operational complexities of further expectations; in this instance "to set up in Luxembourg." My question, line 248, as to whether this affects his effectiveness is attended to by AC but line 250, the prefatory

statement, "the fourth thing is" retrospectively finds my interjection only minimally attended too, and as an interruption to AC's turn.

Lines 249-256 extend AC's suggestion that delivery is about more than just the 32% return; there are implications behind these objectives. One major implication is the new systems that are needed, yet these mean AC must receive an increase in his expenditure budget. AC checks the sense of his prior assertion; "I design the systems, implement", lines 253-4, is reformulated as "I help input the design of systems and the staff implement the systems."

AC, lines 257 & 261, orientates to the nature of this account of his work as a gloss, "a map". He suggests "it's not as clear just on the sight of it", what it is "comes down to setting a plan...communicating the pieces that individuals are responsible for". AC makes explicit that there is a disjuncture between how things look as quantitative practices and how they are in reality. He defines the document as "a map", line 257, to make easy the explanation of his work, recycling the characterisation, line 92.

AC offers a position statement lines 261-2, espousing a logic that management is about "making individuals accountable for a clear set of things, that that individual agrees to be accountable for," lines 263-265. Given that it is an impersonal position statement it is heard as prescriptive, the way one should operate. It relies upon an understanding that people work at activities for which they consent to be accountable for.⁸

People orientated

AC offers a prescription that "accountability" is the "most effective management tool". Lines 266-267 "If you can get people to say I agree that I am accountable to deliver X,Y, Z that'll be delivered or that person will have failed in those objectives" AC's formulation seems to rely on a theory that failing in one's objectives is significant to individuals. That it is a "trick" of management implies something rather deceitful and puzzling. It relies upon an assumption that DB would share with him, that people are motivated by rewards. If I might stray for a moment from the analytical approach advocated of anchoring discoveries to the data, AC appears to have a normative belief that such structures are necessary for the success of the business; to getting things done.

In line 269 AC makes explicit a philosophy that management is about giving "clarity". The line "that's all people ask" offers it as desired by the employees themselves and this signals the acceptance and authorisation of his management tool. AC appends this revelation with "and that's what all of this is about." This implies that it accords some retrospective sense to his earlier account of the "direction setting"; that for him to know what he is doing he has to have clarity; the kind of clarity the budget and the business

strategy can provide. AC formulates himself as one who also experiences this tool of management, he himself is accountable. Line 273 reveals an underlying philosophy that his work is achievable because he gets very clear direction and he's aiming at "very clear end results."

In lines 274-5 I ask AC if anything has been missed off the outline of his work. This is met with the response 'nothing has' because the "categories are very general." This reveals that for AC there is clearly some conception by him of a level of detail appropriate for his "boss" and appropriate for "a discussion document." Line 278 "as we're using it now" establishes the status of the document as it is being used here in the interview as being the manner for which it was constructed.

Line 283-4, orientates to a preferred view of his work as being people orientated, "because my business is a people business; we are a service business so people come first." The summary, line 284-5 is hearable as a closing "Erm that's just my day and you know fitting in there is er this stuff (1.0)". Indeed my response, which is to take up the turn interactionally, co-orientates to this as a closing. In response to my query which changes the topic to how many direct reports he has, line 286, AC opens with "now I've five, I've done with four." The implication from this very matter of fact and insensitive characterisation, "I've done with", seems to suggest some insensitivity to the personalities involved. It quantifies the individuals and given the moral sentiment around dispensing of people it is emotive. We learn from AC that it was necessary for his "effectiveness" to change his Organisation and in line 289-90 that what he means by "I've done with" is that they now "report to somebody else". AC modifies and reformulates his response. He relies upon a conception of a structure which CE and HT, Chapter 4 might recognise as Matrix. It reveals what AC understands managing a functional report to entail. It is about overseeing them, having input to what they do but not day to day responsibility. It is about "touching base fortnightly", "making sure the direction is set."

AC shows a preference for organising his account around the management of his direct reports.⁹ In his formulation he offers some further insights into what he understands his work to consist in, but also some characterisations of what he expects and understands about managing direct reports, clients etc.

A structure of accountability

Over lines 297-387 AC works up an account of what each of his direct reports is accountable for, which we learn is on a functional basis; training, transaction processing, and agent management.

The current theories of senior management, such as Kotter (1980), would have the manager as actively building and utilising a network of contacts, the development and activation of networks requiring interaction with large numbers of people. The picture AC offers is of the external network being managed by "one accountable person", "one specific manager has a big division monitoring those agents".¹⁰ In line 312, my query "so that's really the. your external network?" is orientated to by AC. He recycles "external networks", line 314. The characterisation is interesting for it seems AC's sense of managing includes some control of parts of the environment external to the Organisation.

My formulation of the particular direct report, the manager of the external network, as a "gatekeeper" is at first agreed with, then AC signals that the formulation is incorrect; "No he's a manager of those contracts". AC enforces this by invoking an analogy to himself as being managed by his customers. What this example suggests is that it is morally acceptable to manage people who are offering you a service. As something he himself experiences, "my customers manage me," it is somehow legitimated. An unquestioned aspect of sensible business practice for AC is setting up a structure of accountability; AC explains this reliance in a way which brings out the orientation to end results and performance.

There is almost a feeling that for AC his direct reports are to protect him from the complexity of demands upon him. Line 325, "I only get the bits that are bad" is to imply that he is a problem solver, AC expands the description to suggest "there's a fair amount of channelling ..up", that has to be through him, line 327. The idea of channelling up relies upon a conception of a hierarchical reporting relationship. Line 328 "now uhm saying that" suggests a proviso to the earlier talk, that not all his statistics come from his managers, but "from an independent group," line 330.

Subsequent talk hints of an implicit concern for deception, an understanding that information can be disguised or hidden from him. This suggests for AC there may be a problem of managers circumventing him, of an underlying fallibility in the reporting relationship, that people don't like reporting poor performance. AC raises the issue in a negative, "he wouldn't". Thus it is like a hint of what might be; but by its negation is inconsequential as something that isn't happening anyway. Despite its absence as an eventuality we see that the distortion of information is a concern of management. That the information does not come directly from his managers but from an independent group is not provided for as a conscious strategy by management. Yet line 331 "he won't be able to hide anything" makes contextually appropriate a reading which infers that this independent group may in fact exist for this reason. That AC does not explicitly say this means he avoids making explicit a negative characterisation of his direct reports which might be accusatory and inappropriate to good managerial relations.

My question, line 333-4, returns to the prior topic, formulating the way of managing external contacts as unique to AC. The response from AC is to attend to why he manages like this; but he accepts that it is unique. The rationale over lines 339-350, is that "developing" that particular Organisational structure is the only way to get things done. The rationale for AC lies in their dependence upon the external agents servicing his division "properly", a dependence that AC orientates to as critical to their client service. The organisation that AC has created he orientates to as providing a distinctive solution to the problems of less than "100% perfect service".

The category "agent" is attributed with responsibility for the divisions' "end service" and as possessing the potential to "mess it up." Interestingly the negative implicative action of "messaging it up" is provided for as a reason for their customers not being satisfied. One hears the account of managing the agents by any "techniques," as acceptable; constructed not to be hearable as management domination for their own self interest, but in the interests of another party, the customer. The rhetoric of client servicing legitimates managerial action in terms of a goal-directed end. AC initiates talk on the consequences of not having this organisation; failure to service the customer, excessive demands on his time. There is an interesting ascription of ownership or responsibility in AC's reference to "my clients", "my agents".

In line 341-2 we learn that it is inconsequential to the customer who is accountable or where blame for failure to deliver the service lies. This functions to make sensible line 342-3, "that individual is now totally accountable for making sure the agents never blow." It is to imply that no excuses are acceptable for failure. The invocation of the word "totally", lines 336 and 343, serves to emphasise that there is no exceptioning. It is about being "responsible". Thus "totally accountable" is a category usable to invoke a principle of responsibility. The notion of becoming "totally accountable" clouds the reality of AC's total responsibility for the division. It somehow excludes him from the "running" of the "transaction processing" although as the overall manager it is seen as his problem. For AC Organisational effectiveness, and that includes meeting the profit motive and customer demands, is concerned with control of employees and the divisions' work load, by delegation, accountability and creation of a particular Organisational structure.

Underlying AC's account of his direct reports work is a definition of business purpose which is to create a 100% client service. It is the customer who determines what the business is and it is inconsequential to them who is to blame. Thus a critical feature of service provision for AC is about getting people for whom he is not responsible to do their work, in order that the end delivery is on time.

AC, lines 345-349 and 352-356 implies the organisation of his work comes down to the fact that he does not have time, for him the notions of accountability and delegation are

very practical ones, at its most basic a notion of managing that allows him to get through his work load. It clearly attributes the existence of the direct reports roles as something that has to be for departmental efficiency.

Line 353 "I believe" strengthened by the qualifier "very heavily," hints at a member's theory or espoused logic following and makes disagreement difficult by evoking a sense of it being an absolute and held in faith. For AC it is that to delegate "responsibility and accountability" to his managers for things that he is responsible for at a senior level is normal, best practice. AC's responsibility to a senior level is unchanged by the fact that he has delegated it to a direct report. There is a parallel here to the position of the bank relying on the service of the agents and his reliance on his direct report. AC cannot shed responsibility by delegation; responsibility is clearly tied to the position he occupies in the hierarchy.

In line 357 there is a certain uncovering of a vulnerability to management sovereignty, "I can monitor...but I cannot force change," which reveals a constraint on his management: one not amenable to managerial control; that is the constraint of "time."

A concept of service

AC, line 364, moves on to discuss the role of another direct report, "client liaison." In opening the next topic there is an explicit concern with recipient design and AC offers an alternative characterisation, "customer service", line 365. That it is "what other business' would call it" reveals a nice sensitivity to recipient design and the terminology of business and AC goes on to reveal his understanding of what this is. It's the "customer contact, it's the relationship managers, the account managers ...that just service the client, fix them up."

AC orientates to the significant, distinguishing feature between "customer services" and "client liaison". Customer services is located within the transaction processing unit, line 369-70, whilst client liaison is "one group who does it all tied into the transaction processing manager and agent managers".¹¹ This for AC is a distinguishing characteristic. Explicit in his account is a recognition of how in other industries it is solely the transaction staff who manage the enquiries. AC uses this typification to discriminate service in Banking from other industries; in other business' the transaction processing staff "drop what they are doing" to attend to the customer and therefore disrupt the transaction processing.

AC's formulation orientates to a conception of transaction processing running continuously and that to involve them in managing customer queries is to take them away from their work. AC neatly formulates an account which does several things. Firstly, it

validates the re-organisation of his direct reports, secondly it ensures his aims of 100% service provision is achievable and it distinguishes banking from other service industries.

AC references the department as synonymous with his direct report (by the "he" line 379.) It suggests a perception of his units activities is located at the level of his direct reports. They stand as representational of what each of the units was doing. Line 386, "so its very co-ordinated" as a summary is potentially hearable as a closing, indeed I treat it as such. My question, lines 387-388, serves to change the focus of AC's talk to a concern for how the direct reports "interact together".

Team co-ordination

AC's invocation of "right" establishes the question as attended to. AC refers again to the document, line 389, "that's where this 25% of my time, team co-ordination ... comes in place." This makes evident a reproaching of the verbal account to the document. For AC interaction between the direct reports is offered as synonymous with "team co-ordination." His response orientates to how all his direct reports work together and not just client liaison and transaction processing. It is characterised as "one of the most difficult things".

We see discovered features of the typification "team" revealed as AC accounts for how he co-ordinates his direct reports. In line 392-3, AC refers to what he takes to be an "expected," known in common feature of Senior management work, that of "turf issues, power issues." His explicit appeal to me, line 391 "you can imagine can't you", is visible as an interactive device which implicates me (the recipient) with an understanding of the situation. This makes an admission by me of not being able to "imagine" difficult without being seen as admitting to an uninformedness. I do not request him to elaborate.

For AC the difficulty in team building of "turf issues and power issues," is overcome by creating a "team spirit," it is to imply that to be a team is about working together, about forgetting power or status. AC offers his role as making his direct reports "believe" they are working together, suggestive of being convincing, changing the existing views; thus team building is a constructive process. Communication is not simply what managers spend a lot of time doing but the medium through which managerial work is constituted; part of management is the managing of meaning for those below.

The team for AC is characterised as resolving issues between each other and not through him. AC appears to orientate to team management as a way of organising his work load, lines 403-412. It reduces the demands made on AC's management time by the invocation of some ethos of the direct reports managing each other. The formulation is directional "I

also tell them...so I just look at them and say...first you go.. you let me know" marking the account as instructional.

In the account AC maintains an orientation to the business. Line 414, suggests individual interests are potentially different from those of the business. The notion of working in a team resolves this, being synonymous with working for the business. Thus within the account the notion of team is a further scheme to rationalise the work that AC does. In line 410-411 the notion of "negatively effective" is an interesting juxtaposition of seemingly contradictory terms. The notion of "effective" attributes positive associations of achievement thus by a peculiar inversion of meaning softening the position. In line 415-416 AC offers a position statement tied back to earlier assertions that he has made, "it comes back to giving them the direction that I've been given." This reorientates the recipient to features of his explanation that are already known and suggests a circularity to the argument, interactionally sensitive to ending and suggestive of completeness. It ties the category "team co-ordination" to what on the document was "giving direction".

Line 419 is to admit occasions where AC is required to "mediate because it is not clear as to what is the best result", though they are characterised as infrequent, "once in a while". That AC "mediates" is to imply some distancing of his relationship, it implies involvement without prejudice as the heading off of conflict and crisis.

In line 421, AC poses a question, "so what is the 25% of my time doing?" and sets up within his own turn an extension of topic directed to answering the self posed question. This and the increased pace of his talk has the interactional effect of holding the turn, moving over a possible turn transition, line 420.

A common metaphor ¹² employed by the managers when talking about teams is that of "player." This sporting analogy could be deemed as suggestive of the managers performing amongst others, with some freedom of movement. The metaphors AC employs to present his role as being a counselling, coaching one are suggestive of influence, but serve to underline a sense of him as the expert helper. My questions, line 426-7 which queries whether the team will function effectively with a new manager is characterised by AC as "the big question." He moves, lines 428-431, to an explication of both how he coaches, and what will happen in his absence. The talk has a speech like quality to it, not least by the emotive appeal of line 433-4, "just as countries need leaders, teams need coaches," something that seemed rather out of place alongside the previously rational and pragmatic style. It seemed to confirm a hunch I had that I was frequently hearing the managers talk in a way that they might have deployed in other situations of "talking about management."

For AC his interest in the use of teams, differs from current management research interests which in the main focus on what the inter workings of the team look like; how it makes decisions, how the group solves problems, how it improves effectiveness. For AC as a practising manager it implies work in setting up a shared notion of the business coming first, in exercising leadership to instil in the direct reports the need to manage themselves and work independently of him, and a maintenance role ensuring that this works in practice. A guiding principle for AC managing his work seems to be the setting up of structures in order that things can run independently of him.

I introduce an assumption that teams are not enduring features. This is to characterise them as temporary associations around a manager. Thus it suggests AC has a role in giving stability. AC picks up on this. What makes a team for AC is the "Philosophy" it upholds. This philosophy is his, thus he becomes the creator. The metaphor "philosophy" AC employs has almost a religious connotation. It is suggestive of team building involving intellectual and emotional change. AC characterises his role as the giver of wisdom and knowledge. Is AC suggesting that leadership is more than being just an educator but a provider of something inspirational, moral, almost worshipful? The metaphors; "just as countries need leaders teams need coaches or managers" arouse notions of grandness, of individual power and sovereignty. The reference to "countries" raises notions of national units implying in the instance of his division an almost monarchical role. One can imagine for those who have a special interest, those within the department it would be what Graber (1976) labels a condensation symbol, triggering a whole host of informational and affective associations.

What could these do? Could they exhibit a concern for the symbolic appropriateness of the features of his work? Does it raise AC's status, or is it orientating to his role as providing a vision? Given that we know that the senior manager is an instiller of commitment and motivation this might be important. AC talked of "holding regular sessions to rally the people." Such rhetoric lavish in symbolism conflates the work as more than just a job, it engages attention and arouses emotion.

Although difficult to locate analytically it seemed to me there was a practiced air, a speech-like quality to these lines 433-439. The way this telling was offered, the raising of the voice, the ease of articulation made it seem as if it was indeed a phrase invoked by AC on other occasions. It was offered to me like a speech with AC standing during this time, animated as if it really was spoken from the heart. Was this an exercise similar to that he talked of in line 394 of making me "believe in it?" Having observed the managers, this giving of a vision by elaborate rhetoric was indeed part of their work. They were like orators, they were involved in public speaking where it was important to hold the audience. Ensuring the audience paid close and detailed attention, monitoring what he

was saying in the course of the meeting etc was essential if the manager was to ensure that what was often detailed speech was understood.

In line 442 in response to my question as to whether he needs to prioritise the team's work AC sets up an equivocal position in his account. "I give an indication" is hearable as saying 'I point to but do not instruct', yet in the next line he says that he "follows it up" to see if those priorities are being "handled, and if they're not I communicate." He makes clear that although he sets the end result his direct reports can decide how they accomplish it, lines 445-450. All AC wants is to be informed; "just give me the plan". The use of the word "communicate", line 444, seems chosen, for it has a neutrality; it submerges any power or status relations, yet given its contextual placement it is hearable as an instruction.

The understanding of his work that AC offers is the provision of quality service, lines 453-62. AC espouses a logic that "quality service" comes from a "true team effort" and a belief that responsibility for the quality of service is transferred totally to his managers.

Such a proposal serves to raise the significance of his focus on the way the "team is functioning." AC locates the source of his concern for them operating as a team in the fact that they are judged as a team. If one fails they all fail, line 462, "because the customers haven't gotten what they want". Again from the speech like tones of its delivery it is hearable as a thought through oration. Over lines 459-68 AC's declarative assertions set up a state of affairs where the direct reports "work together."

The naming of the direct reports, in the manner of "Mr Agent" is felicitous; it is clearly recipient designed for it takes role identities from his earlier talk. It allows confidentiality to be maintained avoiding naming actual individuals. Yet it makes significant who AC is referring to, so that one recalls on hearing it details from his earlier account which tie the recipient to the telling.

My question, line 469, which asks AC to consider problems or challenges he faces in his work offers a minimal recognition of his prior turn. It appears that it could have been misunderstood by AC for he continues with a consideration of the problem of team building. Once again the misunderstanding is allowed to stand, I do not take the opportunity to correct/ repair it. AC raises a practical problem he had faced in coming to the division 18 months ago, a problem of communication attributed to people not being used to working in teams. AC unpacks his conception of proper communication as being "through all the channels," "the same communication to everybody at the same time". Line 478 exposes this as impossible; "you can only really do that through a megaphone." This imagery is vivid, but AC extends it by adding that "even then people just aren't listening." Is this to recognise that there are some ideal states of operation that are just not

achievable given reality? One of these realities for AC is that people "just aren't listening."

A further problem AC espouses reminds me of DB's concerns for changing the IT managers to managers orientated to the business. For AC that the direct reports think of work as "just a job" is not sufficient. AC requires a change in the thinking, getting them to look at the situation "as a business." It implies a need to change their way of thinking for AC espouses a belief that "if they understand how it maps in they accept the decision much better."

AC formulates a summary where profit is seen as a goal of all, "the profitability we're all trying to meet", line 486-7. AC's work as a manager appears reasoned by gain and so for him being a business is for him about profit. It projects a possible conclusion, though I do not orientate to the formulation as a conclusion, providing only a minimal receipt; "mhm", line 489. AC continues providing a further potential display that the talk on the topic in progress may possibly be complete and therefore a closing; "they've started to think strategically, business wise as opposed to as a functional person (0.5)" line 490. The acceptance of management decisions, even those such as cutting some body's budget, is understood by AC to be related to their capacity to think strategically and not functionally, line 490-1; what DB refers to as giving them the "bigger picture".

Priorities

My question, prefaced with "If I could change the subject a little," line 495, requests permission to move off the prior topic. It marks a delicateness not of the nature of the topic but of the possible disruption of the normal character of the exchange ie a sudden topic shift. AC's "yes" links his response to the topic summoned up by my preceding question and moves to an account of how he prioritises his work, requested by my question.

The "actually" in line 497, could almost imply that what is up and coming is in some way unexpected, for AC orientates to the customer as number one priority. That customer's complaints "come in" sets up a hearing that the goal 100% service, lines 345, 380 is not being achieved, yet its characterisation reinforces AC's concern to give the 100% service to customers. AC clarifies his assertion by examples of how a problem is dealt with. Line 501, "can't run end of day" is "company talk" but from earlier talk I knew that it referred to the daily back ups being done and the final closing balance of that day's transactions.

In line 504, AC makes it apparent that interrupting his schedule is not good management practice; this is discoverable by his concern to make explicit that he does this "very rarely", lines 503 and 504. That "very rarely" is repeated is to enforce its infrequency.

My response "mhm", line 506, is noncommittal and thus could be taken to result in AC's concern to clarify his assertions. By extending the detail, lines 507-508, he offers evidence as to why it is rare. It appears significant to AC that he is perceived as working to a schedule. Line 507, offers the problems as avoidable "because it's pretty easy to plan out a few days in advance" due to "the level" at which they are servicing clients.

My question, line 519-20 raises the issue of conflicts of interest, something AC's account has not explicitly recognised, his reply is interesting for the sensitivity of its construction, it re characterises what I am actually asking. This however appears to require a delicate introduction. AC reformulates his start three times. His admission of these as occurring "sometimes" is qualified by "very rare", then retracted by the reformulation of it as "a priority". AC offers an additional explanation, but in such a way that its relationship to the original question seems unclear.

Line 521 "I could tell you" points to the possible up and coming talk as potentially newsworthy. This obtains for AC an opportunity to expand his turn. That it is a conditional proposal means that what follows is actually characterised as only a possibility. However, given that AC proceeds to detail what it is that he could tell means that he does in fact actually offer the newsworthy information.

In line 522 AC orientates to a further priority being to his direct reports. For AC the order of priorities is not static they can change, they are practical; contingent on the particulars of the occasion. That AC will "drop anything" if a direct report has a problem implies the sincerity of his concern, hearable as saying he will put them above the business. Yet the reference "even if it takes me an hour or two", line 525, tells us a great deal about how AC views his talk with the direct reports, its in terms of time. If it was such important work would time be so significant?

Objectives- a "moving target"

In the absence of a response from me AC introduces the topic of objectives, line 532. It seems at first glance that AC, over lines 532-564, is offering plain speech on the objective setting process producing an account about the efficient allocation of work in the formal organisation of the bank. The account making clearly relies on my understanding of a business plan and the hierarchy; "now I hand these down to my staff."

There is a suggestion of autonomy in AC's acquisition of objectives. He sets his own, bringing his "area into play" which suggests linking his division's work to performance in the wider Organisation as he wishes. AC does not formulate an account which recognises control from his "boss;" his preference is to be totally responsible for his policy and programmes. His delegation of "very individual quantitative objectives" to his direct

reports is expected given that he has "to be very quantitative", line 221. AC orientates to the fact that they are "individual" objectives and this suggests that though they must operate as a team they are in reality held individually accountable.

AC's orientation to the notion of "dates" reveals an understanding that achieving objectives is doing so by a certain time. In the process of objective setting these dates were a means of control for governing future activities. That these dates are "negotiable" seems to modify the account of delegation, to show it as a negotiated arena. AC offers a similar account of how his managers give objectives to their staff. AC produces a systematised definition of how objectives are passed down the Organisation. This reveals how the Organisation functions and justifies line 546," it all roles up as this huge Team" by the working up of a unity to their practices. What emerges yet again is a gloss of managerial work which appears to be unambiguous and unproblematic.

Lines 546-548 "it's all part of just communicating very clearly and making people accountable for objectives and monitoring them on a quarterly basis" reiterates lines 260-267. Such a modern operandi has clearly been elevated to the status of a summary of the role, but more than that, it is a prescription.

Lines 548-555 orientate to a problem of not meeting the deadlines for the objectives. Part of AC's understanding of management is that the reality of objective setting is different; "it's a moving target all the time you prioritise projects". Objectives and priorities change, such as delaying a project or "bringing in other resources and delaying another project". Failure to meet an objective is characterised within the bank as "missing the objective". From line 553 it is characterised by AC as punishable; "they're not going to get fired" but they "won't get the same pay rise." Underlying this is an implicit theory of human nature that monetary reward is significant. Line 556, is to imply that rewards are related to historic work accomplishments, a notion which might on the surface seem to suggest a fairness; that of "a fair day's work for a fair day's pay." Yet from lines 558-562 there seems espoused a logic that rewards are for end results and that effort is not rewarded.

In line 559 AC invokes the idea of "luck" to imply that an objective they would not achieve could become "irrelevant" because the business strategy is changed. This telling seems to be seen by AC as only having a positive value to the individual's performance; he does not seem to consider the alternative that such an admission might imply; a hearing that someone might have expended energy on an objective that subsequently becomes irrelevant and for which their effort will not be rewarded.

In line 564 AC makes explicit reference to a fact of life being that things don't go smoothly; he espouses a practical standard which recognises this. Achieving 70% of his objectives is "pretty good", "doing very well"; this means that he has to "react" to 30%

not going to schedule. What is insightful is that AC, line 571, explicitly references skills to deal with the unscheduled, the problematic, as part of his job, that its about thinking out processes in order to change the course of the divisions work. AC frequently mentioned the need for logic, he orientated to this in his account of prioritising projects. It reveals a theory of competence that held to a psychological explanation for success. Line 575, "the alternative is guess," discounts alternatives; it makes evident the obviousness of his prescription, legitimises his philosophy.

Structures

AC's account moves on in response to my question, line 576, to work up his set of preferences for Organisational structure. Line 578 the preface, "I mean clearly" seems to implicate the up and coming talk as in some way already known, perhaps referring to the earlier talk on the structure. AC's preference for "clearly set apart areas that can be split" seems to carry some concern for being able to distinguish boundaries. AC reveals an understanding that Organisational structure is contingent on the business one is in. Here his logic is based upon experience in a service Organisation. That AC invokes "a formulae" is to reveal his orientation to prescriptions of best practice, "that no one should have more than a direct span of six or seven." Line 584, he continues espousing a belief that Organisational structure is "one of the critical success factors," the rationale is that without it "the manager at the top will overheat."

AC orientates to the changes he makes on arrival in a new position, line 586-7. The imagery is almost military; "take-over" evocative of control. Line 590 enforces this metaphor with notions of "wiping out people ..bringing in a whole new force," 591. Yet AC works up his account so that the metaphors of military management refer to a way of doing things AC does not himself affiliate with. "I'm a big believer" is an extravagant assertion, he is not just a believer but a "big believer". It personalises his account and suggests he was firmly persuaded to its truth. Such an assertion sets up what follows as an important philosophy; that existing team players are used when reorganising. This was similar to a philosophy IC espouses, Chapter 8, and left me wishing I had asked him why this point was so important. Was it a concern to makes use of existing expertise? or to avoid being seen as ruthless in "wiping" out people?

In line 594 AC makes explicit that it is the business that is the main concern; the extent to which he is concerned for existing people is only to the extent that it does not interfere with business interests. It hints, in a similar vein to IC's account, Chapter 8, of an underlying belief that there is a conflict of interest when reforming an Organisation between the people's interest and the business interest. In the account making AC resolves this dichotomy by the added proviso that the Organisation can be flexible, it can change to accommodate existing people, line 596-7.

A prescription for memo use.

My extended question, line 599-603, is overlapped by AC; but he exhibits attentiveness by the agreement token, "oh yeah". My interest is with the methods by which AC communicates and it leads him to espouse a number of preferences. They are worked up not just as prescriptions of best practice that AC held to, but as practices AC worked to establish as "operating rules" within his division. These arise, however, after what could be a misunderstanding of my question, but is more likely a concern of AC's that I have failed to understand something fundamental, which is the rules that lead managers to select particular means of communication. The whole tone of the account that follows is one that is prescriptive, even slightly irritated, that formulates clearly the parameters for deciding the appropriate occasions of use for memos and reports.

AC espouses a preference for using the memo in two situations; Firstly, "for making things clear; we agree to this, this and this", line 648 "for confirmation, pieces of information to confirm what you said verbally," line 631-2. Secondly, for giving a consistent view of his group operating as a team, line 660. AC's preference for not using them is that they don't allow immediate feedback and thus are slower. He also suggests that they waste time by generating paperwork that needs reply, line 643. In line 604-5, AC quite clearly prescribes that "reports and memos are updates, setting direction should never be on a memo." The rationale for not using the memo reveals AC's understanding that memos are not conversational, nor a substitute for face to face communication. Face to face work is used for setting the Organisation where the feedback that occurs in these meetings can lead to his incorporation of better ideas, line 610.

That my question about the manager deciding which communication to use does not, for AC, note any immutable details of managerial work can be inferred from his reply which makes explicit that if he could not decide which means of communication was right he wouldn't be a manager but a "clerk", line 620. The curtness of this reply serves to imply an ignorance in my questioning. More is at stake perhaps than whether the version is right or wrong. In some way my knowledgeability and credibility is threatened. AC seemed to lose sensitivity in his assessment of my comment and by virtue of the force of its assessment it seems to work to close the topic. As AC understands it this is not relevant to talk about management.

AC's response to my concern that "managers end up working around memos and meetings," line 622 is "We kill that here" and is interactionally interesting. The strength of AC's assertion is such as to curtail any reassertion of the interest that line 622 pursued. It is powerful by its metaphor. If one was to take issue with it one feels conflict would ensue. The fact though that I do not reply leads AC to undertake a further formulation of

the rules he works with. Following the pause of two seconds, AC offers a summary prescription; memos should be used as an "update...memos should never be used for setting direction."

Line 627-29, by the tone of its delivery is almost threatening; "If I see. its made very clear," hearable as marking the activity of memo sending as leading to a reaction from AC. He seems sensitive to the forceful manner with which he is delivering the account, he quickly modifies it and reworks it so as to neutralise the agency. That the rule is "very clear" is to characterise it as explicit, known to all. It implies there is no excuse for not knowing it. These lines, delivered with some interactional difficulty, could point to a concern on AC's part for the accounts formulation. He begins line 628 by a reference to what breaching the rule would be, but it seems AC is uncomfortable in delineating the rule in relation to what happens when it is broken; "that it's made very clear to them" remains highly indexical. The reformulations and manner of delivery; formulations begun with some volume and pace and then suddenly abruptly cut off, give the account an assertive, character. One senses that this is the way it is and it is not an issue for debate; "and people just understand it (1.0)", line 630. This works perhaps as a way of marking, in the absence of any reaction by me (even after a lapse in his telling of one second) that AC is closing the topic. By its finality it suggests no compromise or opportunity for debate.

I do not take up the silence, line 632 and AC extends his account, he offers an example. Several of the managers relied upon real life stories in characterising their world, but this represented a change of style for AC. In what follows AC orientates to some understanding of what he means by memos acting as confirmation. The rationale for meetings is that too much paperwork is generated by memo sending which is inferred as bad management because it takes up too much time. This functions as a covert justification for invoking a rule of practice.

In line 648, AC raises as an advantage of memos the fact that they document what has been said.¹³ If they tie down what has been agreed to a document, then people cannot be held to something that they didn't say. What I find particularly revealing is AC's comment, lines 655-660 which one hears as indicating that he required all his managers to send him copies of any memos they wanted to send in order that he might approve them. This implies that he is a party to all communication and has set up a system where he has a control over the flow of information in his division. It was noticeable that in the accounts there was not an explicit discussion of management relationships and procedures in terms of control and power; rather more a sense that decisions are reached by consensus; "must be a discussion," line 641. Yet underlying this characterisation one had a sense that AC's preference was for retaining ultimate authority, line 661-63. The policy has already been set but AC still expects to see and approve its written form. The

justification would seem to be that it becomes a tool to project an image of a united division, line 659-60, that "they'll look like a team."

Conclusion

The account AC offers does not offer a portrayal of himself as a passive victim of his role, he is a constructor of it; he sets up an account where he has control over his own role and responsibilities.

Unlike DB, Chapter 6, AC is much less concerned with portraying his work as managing the contingencies and uncertainties that impact upon his job. Does this reflect differences in the business they operate in? In their levels in the Organisation? Their experience in positions? Or does it point up the wonderful diversity of managers versions of their real life practices? A diversity which questions the ability of management theorists such as Mintzberg (1973), Stewart (1985), Peters and Waterman(1982), Kotter (1980) and Jackall (1988) to generalise from a limited number of interviews, and which supports an interest in the individual nature of these accounts.

AC is not in the main concerned to evidence his assertions or prescriptions, he regards his own opinion as an adequate source or base of knowledge. He does not feel a concern to defend his point of view and present materials to convince that he is right. His account is offered in an almost confrontational manner. The assertiveness seems apparent by the manner of the accounts form. Such markers as "Right?" "Okay", the tone and speed of delivery and the lack of hesitation at the beginning of turns contrast with the "well" and "uhm" of DB.

For AC much of management is about structuring the work. Given the nature of AC's world the feeling of uniformity and standardisation which pervades his account may be in accord with a concern to show the proper way of managing in a bank, in order to provide standard procedures and offer a standard service. For AC the right is given to manage, to be autonomous, to command down the hierarchy. His is a picture of success. Management for AC consists in achieving the profit targets and meeting the customers' demands. Prescriptions as to how to achieve this are offered; setting the direction, making people accountable, re-organising the structure, concerns for direct reports and team building.

The analysis of this account develops a sensitivity to the collaborative nature of account making begun in Chapter 6. In addition it raises an interesting problem on the issue of what work is in itself being done in these accounts. Management work in the natural setting has been identified as about management of impressions, for example, in putting forward one's own arguments persuasively (Mangham 1988) and in managing decisions

(Giacalone & Rosenfeld 1991). Here analytical purchase is gained on the managers competence in shaping the outcomes of occasions of talk. A competence that was found in Part 1 to have a more general relevance to the work that they do. Exploring the manner of their construction could not only be valuable to interviewers interested in such an analytical approach, but for the managers' themselves.¹⁴ Moving off a topic in a meeting, being persuasive or clarifying a misunderstanding without causing embarrassment etc are not just competencies required for occasions of talk with a researcher.

A concern I am left with looking back at the transcript, is that I display the minimum in terms of response, rarely do I offer any independent information or opinion. What this meant was that I deprived myself as researcher of a resource that had proved crucially important for C.A.'s inquiries. This was the capacity to inspect a next turn in order to discover how a speaker analysed and responded to a previous one. Was there as Sharrock and Anderson (1983) proffer mileage in a more open talk with these managers where meaning is a phenomena achieved with me the researcher? Where the fact that I may not at times understand, might have further questions to ask, or might have offered more than a minimal response, could have revealed the interpretative actions that are employed to "resolve the contingency of meaning." Here though within the accounts the manager's speech sounded intuitively as though it was orientated to me as audience and less as a party with whom to discover what this thing called management was all about. It might suggest that they were used to speech making, to being the only one on the floor, that this lack of recipient response was not for them a problem. Indeed, more than that, response tokens did not seem to be sought; there were no requests for my view or opinion. Indeed I was left with a sense that my comments might even have been discouraged.

Notes

¹ However, as Briggs (1986) suggests the process of interview does not provide the researcher with the opportunity to

"banish the natives' communicative norms that operate in other environments .. the natives' own discourse rules have an odd way of infiltrating the interview" pg 39

² Francis (1982) suggests this is

"the principle way in which conversationalists construct their talk so as to make it talk for this co-conversationalist on this occasion. By such means conversationalists display the occasionality of their talk." pg 199

³ As Schegloff (1980) suggests it is a "marker" in turn initial positions in a new topic. AC can be found to employ a number of other markers that accomplish similar work, such as "So", "well" and "Okay".

"These can be placed at the beginning of a turn without necessarily reflecting any plan for turn construction. As initial terms we find them at occasions of overlap. They allow a start even before a prior turn has been completed and should they be impaired, not being organically implicated in a plan for the turn's construction, their impairment need not involve the impairment of the understanding of the turn." pg 74

Thus they absorb the overlap of the prior turn.

⁴ In Pomerantz's (1986) work on extreme case formulations she suggests that adjectives such as "everyone", and "all" are often deployed to warrant cases or activities. In AC's account he frequently employs such adjectives. What they seem to do, by using the extreme of available dimensions for assessment is provide his account with an air of certainty and self assurance.

⁵ Schegloff and Sacks (1973) suggest that queries frequently elicit "mentionables", certainly here it appears to occasion extended talk on a topic.

⁶ as Heritage & Watson (1980) suggest.

⁷ Button (1987) suggests that by not intervening to make evident the misunderstanding

"the interviewer constitutes a resource for themselves which they can use to make attributions of personal deficiencies, i.e., that the candidate ducked the question." pg 163

Is it that a similar occasion occurs here where I fail to appropriately intervene?

⁸ This put me in mind of Douglas (1980) who in her review and interpretation of Evans-Pritchards work observes that:

"The foundation of meaning according to my reconstruction of his work, is the system of accountability. As people hold others accountable and as they allow the same principles to extend universally, even to apply to themselves, they set up a particular kind of moral environment for each other." pg 71

⁹ AC's account of his work suggests an important role in that the allocation of areas of work for which he is responsible to key individuals is important. This division was not as clear in observing AC's work, for much of his working day impacted upon his direct reports. There was AC's attention to detail, his ideas to be accommodated, his concern to be "kept informed." AC set a precedent in his commitment to the Organisation, the workload he had was large and he organised it himself, prepared to travel to New York with a day's notice, to work for 10 hours a day. AC was booked up for several months ahead and already had dates in his diary for events nearly a year ahead. He said this dedication was because he loved his work

and wanted "to be on top of it". He did not "accept second best". This seemed reflected in the requirements he placed upon his managers; "they are relied very heavily upon" to make sure "things go right." AC was meticulous to detail. One of his staff told me that given detailed documents of financial summaries he could and would go through and spot inconsistencies almost immediately upon receipt. This concern for detail meant those who worked for him probably felt a similar need to keep a check on their activities. This concern for detail was explained by AC as essential given the financial implications of error in quantification at his level in the Organisation where figures were large, he defined it as an important part of his success. He had a feel for what was going on in the division and it enabled him to keep on top of problems.

¹⁰ For AC the agency agreements were "the biggest source for concern within the division." They were the cause of most of the complaints by customers and took up much of his time, despite the clear segregation of the sphere of operation to a "specific manager." In observing his working day the boundary between his sphere of action and the agency managers was blurred. AC did not interfere, but the need to be constantly informed made it a close relationship. AC supervised most of the "agreements", initiated developments and decisions, even took part in negotiations.

¹¹ From observation the reality of the working relationship was that on a daily basis there was conflict between the two areas. That the customer liaison group could evaluate the transaction processing team and direct their work was not accepted readily; there were battles over work priorities, negotiation as to ways to do the work, discrepancy as to areas of responsibility.

¹² Metaphors represented a means for presenting ideas, attitudes and experiences frequently employed by the managers, and would have made an interesting study in their own right. It was not apparent that the managers had a root metaphor that had permeated the descriptors though there were some that were frequently relied upon; the notion of player, painting, military, sport, heroes.

¹³ The managers appeared concerned to keep a record of communications. Thus the managers offices bulged with filing cabinets and records of their interactions stretching from several years past. In fact on another occasion of meeting AC was eager to recount how the memo system operated for him as a means of control, of ensuring he was "informed as to what was going on". It was referred to as "Follow up system." Each memo that was received was given a date for when it would need to be actioned by; copies of memos he sent were given dates for when they should be actioned. These dates were then used to file the memos and each day AC received a profile of what issues should be dealt with and therefore a reminder of issues to check up on. The memos were filed in a folder which had a slot for each day of the month. Follow ups over a month away were filed in the very back until their relevant slot became vacant.

¹⁴ A collection of papers edited by Giacalone & Rosenfeld (1991) applying impression management to Organisations identify it as an important strategy in amongst other areas career management, negotiations, managing gender relations and conflict management.

"Positive and negative binds.

Negative: Can't win. Everything I do is wrong

Positive: Can't lose. Everything I do is right

I do it, because it is right.

It is right because I do it."

R.D. Laing (1970)

Chapter 8- IC in conversation (Health Authority General Manager).

In this chapter, in the manner of Chapters 6 & 7, I explore one further instance of a manager talking about his work (appendix ix). The manager, whom I refer to as IC, was a District Health Authority General Manager. The account was offered to me on my request to IC to "talk about his work." Through such talk we come to know something about the kind of a place he manages and the kind of person he is. The account is offered as the way things are unproblematically available; not as a series of disparate responses but as a reasoned telling.

In relation to the materials examined there are again two axes of analytical interest, the managers' conversational orientations and the set of practices through which managers' accounts of their work can be accomplished. I attempt to stay close to the unfolding order of the account in my explication of the transcript, to offer a detailed, descriptive analysis.

Background

I had met with IC on one previous occasion, several weeks before this meeting, at a development seminar for a number of his senior managers. During a brief chat as to the reason for my presence at the meeting (that, in fact, being to shadow one of his senior managers) IC suggested that he often talked about his work. IC said that he frequently had to talk about it, "to staff, national bodies, the Health Authority, and the press" and he would be happy to explore with me what management for him consisted in. It was he who invited me for interview. The manner of this introduction seemed to invest the subsequent meeting, which provides the data for this chapter, with the feeling that such talk was for IC an everyday occurrence. Indeed it appeared that the occasions of talking about his work was one way by which IC established himself in the large and complex network that existed around his job. IC suggested that it was by talking about his work that he made himself 'visible' in the district.

Surprisingly IC did not request a detailed explanation as to what the research was about, it was sufficient that I should just be interested in what Senior Managers did. But why this interest in telling me what he did? With IC especially, I got the distinct sense he was checking out and giving publicity to what it was that he was doing; ensuring that his operating philosophy was "sound."

The meeting took place a fortnight after his offer to talk with me, during the first free slot in his diary. It took place in his "temporary office." That it was only "temporary" was made explicit by an apology both from IC himself and by his secretary. A sparse, large room looking rather uninvited in and containing no personal effects it stood in strange contrast to the other managers' luxurious and personalised offices similar however to them by the presence of a large table with the dozen or so surrounding chairs and a desk.

Analysis

"Running a business."

I open the business of the meeting, line 1-2, somewhat protractedly; indeed with something like a request for permission to pursue the particular topic my question introduces; what as he understands it his work entails. This sets the agenda, offering some gross sense of the work to be done in the forthcoming talk.

IC's response; line 3, "no problem" confirms receipt of my request and he takes up my invitation to talk; "for me where we do the work....". I seem to dissatisfy to this by failing to align with it, taking up the one second silence to initiate a question that has the character of an opening; "What are the key characteristics of the Organisation you are managing?", line 7-8. In what follows we see the account is permeated by the logic and language of business, what Gowler and Legge (1985) would see as "symbolic classifications" ie size, revenue, cash, mission. Relying on terms used in the everyday world of business, IC is able to construct an account which provides for the fact that he does run a business. From line 11-12, "I mean first of all to give you an indication" there is a sense that IC is doing some preliminary work that is orientated to me, as recipient, perhaps a concern to educate me in order that I understand subsequent references.

The vocabulary IC invokes, such terms as "mission", line 19; "general management structure", line 23; "the basis of our business", line 19; "consumer orientated", line 31, fits that of a general notion of what it is to be doing business. They are words associated with a rational, goal directed image of Organisational effectiveness. Invoking the vocabulary of business demonstrates that the NHS has the same orientations as an ordinary business and thus by such rhetoric IC could be found to manage the meaning of what he does. IC clearly wants to present his role in terms of a model of the private

sector, to establish his Organisation as like a business and that he is in fact managing a business. It could be that this is somehow revealing for him, or it may be that he sees it as revealing for me. Just why he has this concern is not apparent, the underlying sense is an understanding that the criteria I would use to make sense of his account would be that of a business. It indicates perhaps an assumption on IC's part that managing a health authority might not be perceived as managing a business.

I had a hunch that the concern to couch his account in the vocabulary of business came from IC's recognition of the criticisms of NHS management and its organisation;¹ a concern to indicate his competence at managing a business. To be a competent manager he should be managing a business. Willmott (1984) raises an interest in managers doing 'image work.' Perhaps we see something of this here in the opening lines where IC attempts to rework the popular image of the NHS manager or at least what he sees as this image.

What is felicitous about these early lines is that they reveal IC's understanding of what being a business is. That my question employs a characterisation of his Organisation as a business might explain this orientation. However it is interesting that IC chooses to orientate to this at all; for IC that they are a business is not an issue to take for granted, but to attend to explicitly.² IC's work is about managing, not just a revenue allocation, and he makes explicit that for him this is £4 million but a turnover which again is offered in terms of the private sector, "people tell me to er convert that to er to a turn over in the private sector." IC's concern to characterise things in private sector terms reveals that he acknowledges a difference, which I as researcher was not to be expected to know, but that was important to how I evaluated his work. That "people tell me," line 13, indicates IC's sensitivity to the believability of his account; a concern to authorise it by invoking it as the suggestion of a third party and to indicate a sense of independent collaboration.³

IC provides a rationale for the conversion to private sector terms, "that was the point when they were looking for General Managers." IC makes reference to an evaluation of General Management roles in the Health Service as having been by a comparison with the Private sector, line 14. I knew from background knowledge that IC's reference to the people doing the evaluating as "they" referred to the investigative team for the Griffith report (1986). The concern of this report was to improve management in the NHS by placing requirements on Health Authorities to function as financially accountable, much more like a business. Here IC uses it to authorise his telling. Having done so he continues recounting his work with a certain equivocality; how what he does is like a business, yet not like a business.

The extract continues to unpack a nest of propositions which serve to reveal something of IC's definition of what a business is. IC must provide the quantity and quality of health

care within a resource constraint, line 21. Given that the Health Authority is about the provision of health care which is not traditionally viewed in a rational-economic framework this statement appears somewhat unexpected. It achieves a distinction between traditional conceptions of giving health care to all who need it, an "open to all service" as another manager characterised it, and it being restrained by finite resource concerns. The evocative power of the term health care is transformed by the rational economic notion of it being as a business.

IC espouses the mission, lines 19-22, which is offered as "the purpose of the business". It relates his concern with management of a business to social obligations of providing health care; "but", and the but is significant, qualifying this as "within resource constraints." This is a potential closing by the silence, line 22, but in line 23 IC orientates to the second part of my question "the characteristics of the Organisation," offering an explanation of this in terms of its structure, the management of professionals and the extent of control and review.

Line 26, establishes IC's recognition that part of his work is fitting the professionals that he manages into a defined system of accountability, line 28, and that this is problematic. Accountability was something AC orientated to, Chapter 7, but here it is a cause of concern for IC because of the autonomy of the professions. This notion of a "defined system of accountability" unpacks further IC's image of what being a business is; a recognition that conventional management is about the accountability of staff.

How IC formulates the account is interesting. The opening of IC's talk frames his account within the context of being a business, it could almost be heard as set up to resolve a possible trouble that he expects in the reciprocity of his talk; that I will not see him as managing a business.

In line 32-33, that his work is "characterised by a fair amount of central control... but an awful amount of flexibility" makes the degree of control a defining feature. The recipient design might be evident in line 34-5, by IC's sensitivity to how much control he has; that I might not see him as managing a business because of the fact that there is central control (by this I assume he meant regional and government). IC makes explicit that this would be an incorrect assumption; "what we do is left totally to people here," they have operational control. One might hear that part of IC's definition of being a business is that it mustn't be too centrally controlled; its about flexibility to decide what you do. He says "erm obviously to a consumer orientated thing (.) erm we're characterised by a fair amount of control but an awful lot of flexibility." The "but" here foreshadows the "fair amount of control."

IC not only establishes and maintains his identity as a NHS manager but also sets up an identity of this being management of a business. The extract unfolds to reveal further understandings of what characterises a business. It is about having a tight review system, having to think in resource terms and possessing "not only manpower money but era very large estate component", line 43. In fact in line 43-44 IC seems to offer a summary formulation making explicit his orientation to being like other businesses ; "We're very comparable to most other Organisations". In lines 45-47, IC, whilst retaining the picture of a business, goes on to differentiate his Organisation. What is different is "it's highly professionalised nature.. doctors and nurses seem to have higher degrees of community respect."

So to clarify my position as analyst what I am suggesting is that as IC accounts for his position we see revealed within these formulations what he understands the characterisation "business" to consist in. His concern in the account to establish himself as a conventional manager leads him to offer a solution/ characterisation of his work, one that fulfils his understanding of managing a business.

In line 50, my query invites extension. IC's reply indicates that managing professionals is problematic. IC identifies the difficulty as not being able to "impose instructions without much negotiation," line 52-3. We see revealed IC's understanding that when managing professionals one cannot impose, one must negotiate and persuade. In line 54 my assertion can be found to be received by IC as a request to explicate how it is for him. On the basis of lexical or grammatical considerations it is not such, nor is it by its sequential location. The response can be heard as relevant to my original request, line 1-3. IC overlaps my talk, line 55 suggests that his position is quite different from other managers because he is a generalist. IC clarifies what is under discussion, "as we're talking about a General Management issue", line 59. Retrospectively we can hear this interruption as doing something like 'educating,' suggesting that possessing a technical competence is not an issue of relevance to General Managers and not of relevance therefore to discussion here. What is significant to IC's understanding of his managerial work becomes, line 60-1, how one can "balance erm the views of all the professionals."

IC offers a members' theory of what managing professional people entails. IC espouses a logic that this is so for any general manager. In lines 62-66 IC raises what is salient about managing professionals, it is to "appreciate what they're talking about.. understand what they're talking about." The "but", line 63, makes explicit the contrast and develops a sense of the balance that he talks of in line 60. IC qualifies this in a way which seems to authorise the rationale, that one needs to know enough not to be "conned". This is a fascinating image which points to an aspect of his work as finding the truth; there is a special character to the professionals, it is about them offering a false pleading, not unlike DB's conception of his customers, Chapter 6, where management's work, is "seeing

through" their various motives. The connotations associated with "conned" are of persuasion, manipulation by dishonest means. What is interesting is that it is not offered to me by IC as spurious work, his orientation to it is quite overt; he does not offer it as deviating from an objective of proper managerial work.

Authority for IC's account seems to derive from its status as everyday, routine management, part of life; "life's about seeing through all that," line 66. This statement of human nature points up the fact that people shape arguments for their own interests and this in itself creates managerial work.

In response to my rather protracted question IC reveals a sensitivity to the sequentiality of our talk, line 69, "we're going on to that". It's as if IC has some conception of what the next part of the speech should be, as if there is a natural flow to his telling that justifies his overlapping my speech. It is a mark of his interactional control; it could almost be a rebuke of my attempt to shape the talk, or perhaps an indication that I, as recipient, interrupt him and preempt his up and coming topic; almost a display of dispreference for researcher initiated questions at this point in the talk. In lines 72-73 IC reveals considerable interactional difficulty in formulating a response; his answer aligns to my query by virtue of the inclusion of "effective". Yet his reply can be found to display continued attention to his effectiveness and not that of "those managers below" him. It is some 10 lines later that IC responds to this question, line 85.

Effective performance

The concern for what being effective consists of in his job is again coloured in the language commonly associated with business, line 75, "knowing what happens on the shop floor", line 84, "feedback and monitoring." It sounds rather like a reading from a business text, a list of what a good manager does. It reveals IC's preferred image of what being a manager consists in; such skills as listening, knowing the business, perceiving correctly. Lines 76-80 are similar to AC's and DB's concern that what seems to be happening may not be so in reality.

IC can once again be heard to display a concern for maintaining the image of his management practice being normal business practice; "that's the same for any Organisation", line 83. Here by implying a potentially negative aspect of his work is common to all business IC characterises it as a normal, natural problem of management. The solution is offered as "feedback and monitoring", line 84; terminology also employed by AC and assumed by both managers to be recognisable and sensible to me.

In line 85, IC poses himself a question thus opening up for himself the interactional space to reply and the right to extend his talk past a possible transition point into a whole new

unit; "what do I expect from my managers?" This, though, can be found to be a recycling of the second part of my question, line 70-1 which would seem to authorise his right to the extended talk.

The expectations that IC holds for his direct reports is easily disseminated, lines 86-88, pointing perhaps to the familiarity and thought through nature of the formulation. There is a comfortableness in his delivery "they must provide a good quality service; they must communicate well and involve their staff." The reformulation of "expectations", line 85, to "role", line 86, introduces a sense of being officially prescribed. We learn what for IC are performance indicators. It is not just comparison to "other districts, other authorities" line 93, but "things like how quickly people get access to care." It suggests a social account concerned with how patients are treated; "do people deal with them sensitively?" "how are they received?"

In response to my query, line 89-90, IC espouses his understanding of quality service; it mirrors AC's comments that it is about how the end user perceives you. Line 101, "there are three dimensions" sets up a position of an extended turn being up and coming and this works interactionally to discourage interruption until he has recounted these. The first dimension, line 104, "whether the nurse smiles" is a vivid image of what the health service stands for, so that service, "getting it right" is not just about technical competence and the interactions involved. For IC this is revealing to me the second dimension, an awareness of "how much is going on." The third component of performance is financial control, line 111, a concern that perhaps maintains the conception of being a business. This leads on to, two further dimensions; planning and achieving tasks.

IC summarises his direct reports work; line 113-5, its "not only managing the year's activities within the defined resource levels, but planning the developments within the overall planning system or framework." IC organises his answer in the manner of a list. Examining this long turn and others of a similar nature finds that there is an absence of verbal response from me, as recipient, during their course, permitting extended turns by the managers. My talk seems to occur on occasions where there is concluding summary comment or where quite explicit indications of topic closure occur, such as line 116, "so their job's about those four things."

In line 117, I begin a request orientated to clarification of IC's prior utterances. My formulation however is overlapped by IC. He makes explicit his preference that these "components" of effectiveness be seen as a prescription for any manager in any functional business. Not only does it characterise his formal prescription as far reaching, but yet again it sets his way of having things done as the business way.

Line 128 is interesting because my attempt to make clear the sense of IC's formulation creates an interactional difficulty. For IC my characterisation of these criteria of effectiveness as indicating "managerial skills" is not correct. He aligns to my suggestion but with interactional acumen works a space to offer a correct response to my interest in skills.

IC accomplishes the right to expound these details by addressing a hypothetical situation, that would have occurred had I asked this as a question; "If you wanted to say to me?" It is interactionally interesting, one could suggest that IC uses my mischaracterisation to extend his telling, constructing a legitimate right to expound what management skills look like. It could also be that he checks out whether my query, line 128, is meant as a question, ensuring he is not seen to be avoiding a question.

We learn that the skills of management are "dealing with people, knowing people, spotting strengths and weaknesses", "analysis", "judgement" and "recognising your own limitations." It was a list that I felt could have gone on and on.

In response to my question "how would I see the skills?" IC, line 140-1 makes explicit, though with some interactional difficulty, that for him it is "knowing one when you see one." It is something like the "gut feeling" that AC talked of, "that strange combination of personality and experience" that DB refers to. IC works up an answer with a re-orientation to the basic skills and a consideration of the contingencies that make seeing these skills difficult. His understanding is that situations of the job demand different skills. IC uses his formulation to introduce this as the biggest aspect of his work. What recognising management skills means for him is something pragmatic; it is about "getting the right people....in the right place", line 152. There is an understanding that recognising managerial talent is a skill in its own right; that it is a skill essential to setting up an Organisation.

In response to my suggestion that "getting the right people in the right place" is his biggest task because he hasn't been in the position long, line 153, IC's response is surprisingly brief, "Yes sixteen months". In line 155 my question, "Has that been perhaps your most major concern?" appears misplaced, given IC's earlier assertion that this is his biggest task. It perhaps reflects a lack of attention to his preceding utterances. Line 156, IC aligns to my question with "Yes it is" but moves the topic on to orientate to the re-organisation he has achieved in his 16 months as General Manager, lines 156-163. The account, organised within rhetorical formats, appears not unlike those shown to elicit applause in public speaking (Atkinson 1984, Heritage & Greatbatch, 1986) perhaps revealing IC's preference to be heard as something of a "miracle manager" (anonymous colleague.) It reveals a preference for characterising his accomplishments in terms of reduced management costs. Line 158, IC's qualifier "and they weren't high" shows a

sensitivity to the fact that his accomplishment might be heard as commonplace, or indicative of inferior performance in the past. The accounts construction is such that IC is the initiator of the change; the figure of £1 million stands for, points up for IC something about how they do things.

For IC these figures are symbolic and he assumes also for me, as recipient; "it says so much not only about our management arrangements but also about where our priorities are," which I take to imply more money for patient care. That it "says so much" reveals an underlying belief that financial figures can indicate the position of the Organisation. Here the cost reductions are heard as positive attainments. It is also symbolic for those in the Organisation; it stands "to tell people what's expected of them". Re-organisation for IC, and AC included a redefining, changing the way people see things. It suggests a practical feature of management work is something like image making; something IC goes on to say more about lines 290-334. Is it that setting up managing in the Health Service as like that of managing a business, is not just a rhetoric for me as researcher, but also a practical concern for IC; a concern to instil this meaning in his managers?⁴ Given that output in the health service is not measurable as profit and that quality of service is intangible IC's orientation to costs is reasonable, especially given his apparent concern to formulate an account of operating as a business. It defines the many forms and possibilities of management in terms of the absolute explanatory feature of "costs."

My interjection line 164, would appear to interrupt IC's turn, given that his preceding line, "basically what we've done", sets up a kind of story preface telling us that an account of his experience is up and coming. IC attends to my question but it is apparent that the topic I introduce is not the one which captures the point of interest for him. IC's response to my interest in the management team is rather equivocal. I do not take the opportunity to pursue the comment, allowing IC an extended turn. Despite the interruption IC with interactional acumen accomplishes a position where he can offer a recollection of his experience. He does not explicitly disagree with my characterisation; he aligns to it by suggesting that it is what they are trying to do rephrased as what they have done. He uses it to introduce for consideration a new topic; what it is that has "amazed" him in their position. This is revealed as a change from a "2 million pound deficit to a 2 million pound surplus." The implication of this is that team building for IC is not a topic to discuss on this occasion. His preference is to orientate to what is unusual about the change.

IC re-orientates the focus of his account. He handles my interjection by preserving the correctness of my evaluation but develops the account so that he can achieve his desired telling which my interruption, line 164, has jeopardised. For IC what is amazing is something to do with influencing people to change themselves. It is this that he attends to and in so doing can be found to provide me as recipient with a quite obvious framework

to infer that this change must in some way be accredited to him. Line 172-3, however, explicitly mitigates such a hearing, "it isn't me; I mean they've done it."

IC invokes third party comment, line 172-3, "most people say 'well you've come'" to bring in a suggestion that this change is because of his appointment. The formulation allows him both to raise the idea in my mind, as recipient, of his involvement, yet also to display appropriate modesty and to suggest that it is attributable to his subordinates. The interactional delicacy is felicitous, for IC does not say explicitly, "look what I've done", but sets up a hearing that it is in fact his doing. This display of modesty seems at odds with both lines 156 & 172, where he offers the prescription that the explanation lies in the leadership style. It is this retrospective sequence that sets up such a hearing. For IC his contribution is bringing a particular kind of style, and I am left wondering if he has stage managed the account; set up a telling where the inference is that he has brought the Organisation success.

A view on leadership

In line 174, my response "but perhaps you've instilled a motivation," could be taken by IC as an opportunity to claim some responsibility for the changes. IC's response does not align explicitly with my assertion; he continues his prior turn. IC recycling his turn displays a remarkably precise relationship between the end of a prior turn and the emergence of the new turn from the overlap and recycling of the turns beginning. IC extends his talk past my question, indeed he speeds up his delivery as if trying to move to discuss "the other thing" before I can interrupt.

IC's preference in accounting for how managers accomplish change is leadership style, line 178. For IC successful re-organisation is dependent upon the style of the leader. In lines 177 & 178-180 IC begins to work up interactional space to espouse a logic of how things get done. "If you were saying to me" works up a characterisation of a possible next turn from me, as recipient. The proposed question by virtue of being sequentially linked to an answer paradoxically creates for IC the opportunity to attend to it and thus extend his turn. What follows, lines 181-183, is a lovely characterisation of what leadership style consists in. The need is to have an overall view of the situation, to be objective about where you are leading, and what people will expect you to do. This was a similar orientation to AC's concern for setting the direction, giving clarity in Chapter 7 and to DB's concern to see "the whole picture", Chapter 6.

"Life's like that"

IC moves on from concerns with whether he is perceived as managing a business to characterising his work by metaphors of life. It is interesting that he uses metaphors to

organise and explain something of his work. It might be that there is something about a metaphor that allows the manager to take succinct qualities of his argument but not to have to unpack why this is so from his knowledge, his experience. Could it be that the metaphor offers a means to provide for the object like categories of an activity with a certain economy of expression? In this instance the flow of meanings associated with the notion of "life's like that" etc associates management with the everyday, taken for grantedness of life. It is suggestive of a certain inevitability. IC sets up a metaphor which can't be moved out of, it's a *fait accompli*, it's given, something everyone has to accept. It reminds me of a view of management which says it is no good complaining; you've just got to get on and manage. It shows life as tough, something outside of IC's direct control. Part of management for IC is facing reality and for him this is something many people fail to do.

In line 186, IC dramatically indexes another view of what has caused the change, "some ..would say it's fear (.) uhm of failure." This characterisation of how things get done hints at some retribution for failure yet we are not a party to what this is. It hints of some unpleasantness impending, associated with deficiencies. That IC re characterises the failure, making available his preferred understanding that it is about them "realising that there are consequences," continues a view that management is about facing up to the reality. IC makes no attempt to develop an aetiology of fear, yet he refers to it again line 192. We learn that the reason for his concern is that "some people" have suggested that fear is the cause of the Organisational success. This is not his preferred way of understanding the success and he works up his preferred way over lines 190-227; that it is about having a "clear picture". That "it is quite untypical to have such a clear picture in the NHS" emerges from an agreement with my proposal, line 189. For IC there is a continuing concern to distinguish himself from being an ordinary NHS manager.

Although analysis could not point up the reason for IC's concern with explaining the success it seemed probable that it reflected for IC an image of his management. If there was a view that an underlying "fear" drove the change, then it was understandable that he should attempt to direct attention to an alternative thematic.

What follows is an account which works to offer an explanation coached in the metaphor of a football game. I was to hear IC use this very same metaphor again not just within this account but with his Senior Management team during a meeting to review the district 10-year plan some several weeks later. Such metaphorical associations with sport are frequent in management literature accentuating certain features such as collectivity, competition and activity which are characterisations held in common with business Organisations. There is a pronounced masculine dimension to the metaphor of football, a predominately male pursuit. The metaphor is suggestive of general rules existing which have to be obeyed (Billig, 1987) However, the rules provide the latitude for the players to

develop their own individual strategy and styles of play, IC referring to himself as “coach” establishes himself as the administrator of the game, who can make or change the rules. It might be that by using the metaphor IC can exclude as irrelevant to this consideration, those peculiar features, such as uncompetitiveness that receive prominence in the typifications of management or leadership in the NHS. Here the metaphor emphasises that the success can be attributed to the communication of “clear ideas” by the management. It invokes a view that this particular way of working leads to success and forecloses a possible exception to the claim that such an arrangement is not practical.

In lines 198-203 IC establishes a circularity or mutually supportive feel to his account. He establishes a link in the tale between the players expressing themselves (a display of individualism, indicative it seems to IC of good performance) and the fact that this comes from their confidence which derives from having been given direction, “knowing what you're doing.” The formulation reveals the good sense and logic of these ways of working; the metaphor allows IC to make visible succinct qualities of his argument; but at the same time he does not have to unpack why this is so from his experience. In using metaphor he relies on the assumption that the essential nature is observable. It cleverly excludes any other characteristics of the object thus removing them from possible questioning, and avoiding any need to index a biography.

IC once again espouses a philosophy of management which is about having to recognise reality. What is real is that if they fail in their targets there is a penalty, line 207-8. The problem and solution is located in their individual performances; the penalty for failure is directed to the individual, lines 210-213, whether it be the sack, no bonus, or awareness that one could have done better. In line 216, IC reveals a recognition that in his position management can seem uncaring. This is an interesting admission but what IC orientates to is not its moral implications, but how he personally manages the role. This is his pragmatic concern; its resolution comes from a reliance on an almost official appeal, line 214-6, “you’ve gotta appreciate it from my point of view .. even a high ranking top flowing Health Authority in a managerial sense is uncaring.” For IC it is understandable that a high ranking Health Authority is uncaring.

The assumption IC works from is that if people cannot achieve then they are replaced, line 221-222. That this might seem hard is recognised by IC, line 218, but by the metaphor of football one sees it as essential to success. He implies that to be successful performance must rank as more important than the people. For him it is taken for granted that he should put his District at the top of the “league”.

In line 224-225, IC re-orientates to the issue of fear. It seems discordant with the analogy of sport, yet I take it to mean that people improve their performance because they are frightened of failing. In line 226-7 IC says he can understand this point of view but that it

is not realistic. His version, that it does not recognise the reality of life directs attention away from his personal agency and belief to a more powerful agency, that of "life". Lines 227 & 229-230, extend the philosophy of life and work up a view of the Organisation being a hostage to fate, characterising it as constrained by social life's inevitability. Management for IC is about facing up to the reality that there is a penalty for failing; it is one of the basic facts of life. This is why management might seem "uncaring" because it must work within this fact. The re invoking of how it is in the world of sport legitimates his explanation. What underlies his characterisation would seem to be an orientation to management as about winning, not about being "second or third from bottom."⁵

The reality of life is the "missing piece" in the account. By this I mean that it provides IC with a means to say that its like this whether one manages in the public or private sector. It re characterises concerns of what his management looks like. It is not even about whether managing in the public sector needs to be more like managing in the private sector, really there is no intrinsic difference in being in the public or private sector. Management is as it is because life is like it is. It is like that whether it is a football team, or business, or the National Health Service. He has to manage that way. Life is tough, inevitable something outside his direct responsibility and control.

Management is about recognising this reality, "for most action there's a consequence"...."so life's all about clearing hurdles". By such a conception IC undercuts any possible objection or dissent from his argument. He is securing, by pre-emption, a position where possible objections to his view have been dealt with. The account has a feel of having been well rehearsed, of being less spontaneous than DB's account; that there was a predetermined set of issues that could be talked about in a particular way. Yet this can be offered only as a noticing⁶ for it is difficult analytically to ground. It would be easy to reify language, to say that the absence of false starts, pauses etc indicates a familiarity with the offering of an account of life, yet this does not touch upon what, empirically, the data has to show to support this sense of a "used before" hearing.

"Bringing clarity".

The view of management that IC espouses, line 236, "I think it's about bringing a clarity and reality," and "being prepared to live it out", hints at the need for courage and persistence. It is an orientation to a sense that putting this clarity into place is not easy. In line 238-239 IC returns to his concern to foreclose any understanding that the quality of NHS management is different from the Public sector; "I don't actually believe there is an intrinsic difference between the quality of managers in the public or private sector." IC develops this, lines 241-244. What is interesting about the orientation of these utterances is that they do not appear aligned to any prior utterances. This statement can be heard to challenge and anticipate any implicit understanding that I might hold.

My commendation line 245 invokes a sensitivity in IC's reply to the quality of NHS managers nationally. IC appears to have some difficulty in formulating a response, it is replete with restarts and pauses. Does he hear my response as attributing Organisational success to his personal competence? a recognition that he might be setting himself up as exclusive? Line 247 characterises the position as one that exists nationally thus removing any sense of exclusiveness.

Over lines 254-257 IC outlines his role and returns to my assertion, line 189, that he has "brought clarity". The lines are reminiscent of AC's comment about managing people; "all they ask for is clarity." It seems "giving direction, bringing clarity and effectiveness..." could be read straight off as a formal prescription of his role. The "supporting, helping, making sure they live out the clarity" is AC's "follow up" and "monitoring."

The comments about bringing "clarity" and "direction", imply the existence of initiating behaviour by IC. Given that we know the "reorganisation" has been financially successful it characterises his management style in a positive way; the formulation of the account implicates him with responsibility. My question, as to how he achieves clarity, leads IC to orientate to what we might refer to as his management style.⁷ IC, over lines 261-266 formulates his management style as rigid; this way of operating, is not the flexible style which traditional conceptions of management would have us believe to be the preferred way of operating. Line 261, "I'm not a rigid person", IC sets up his account of his management as different from who he is as a person. His line "but sometimes the only way," implies that being rigid is negatively characterised but is necessary for doing his job. It implies IC can change his style, that to manage effectively is to have to do things which are perhaps different from one's basic nature and perhaps are unpleasant.

In line 269, IC discloses a situation where rigidity is needed; when "nasty things" must be done. What is it about doing "nasty things" that demands this? What we do not learn is what IC means by "nasty things." It clearly is not easy to articulate, line 269⁸

"Organisational issues"

IC extends this account of his management style and of being rigid by an example, his ability to "separate Organisational issues from the personality issues" (lines 277-294.) Line 274, "so in other words" suggests a reformulation is up and coming, perhaps orientating to my minimal response. The formulation is interesting for it provides a framework for managing concerns for the individual and also for the Organisation. It offers a remedy for the problem of conflict between the two interests. IC's prescription is that analysis of the Organisations situation should be uninfluenced by the position of

individuals; when making decisions about the Organisation "I don't let Mr X cloud my vision of the analysis", line 277. For IC his approach orders the relationship between individual consequences and Organisational ones placing them not as affiliated but as distinctly different concerns (line 279-280). IC sets up a category set, individual/Organisation. By separating the categories he is not excluding concerns for the individual from his work, but sets them up as inappropriate concerns under the category Organisation. In his reporting the accountability and intelligibility of the conclusion hinges on our understanding of the interlocked and simultaneous relevancies of different categorical identifiers: individual, manager and Organisation.

IC is using category concepts to make apparent that in his work individual needs and Organisational needs are not mutually exclusive and that his proper obligation is to resolve both. What seems to worry IC is that it is possible that concerns for the individual may "cloud his vision." There is something about management for him which is about not being taken in by individuals occupying particular positions, about being rigid. This philosophy distinguishes him from his management team. It is this philosophy he brings to the Organisation. It is this ability to separate the issues that brings clarity, line 287. The formulation sets up reference to the problem as two distinct management tasks; keeping the Organisation together and then being compassionate and caring; "then I think I have a duty", line 281. This implies a moral or legal obligation. The concern for the individual seems orientated to as if he is bound to or ought to do it. It carries the binding force of what is right rather than what he believes.

What IC suggests is "that individuals get them all jumbled up" and the consequence is "no action, deterioration or compromise" which "makes things worse." One has a sense that IC's characterisation of his work as "being about redefining problems," line 290, is thus actually being explicated in the account; he is delivering a prescription that managerial work is primarily about solving the Organisational problem and not compromising, "you actually deal with the problem". In line 298-9 IC espouses a view on human nature; "quite often people (1.0) 'll not decide things because they're so burdened by th'other issues(1.0)." IC prescribes a "staged approach," the need for "some analysis" though he does not explore what this consists of in any depth, nor is he asked to. IC orientates to the reality of problem solving; solving one creates others, IC's prescription is that before action is taken you must decide which is worse.

"Social accounts".

IC overlaps my question, line 301, which I have prematurely interjected and he proceeds with the prior topic deferring attention to my question until line 302. IC offers a metaphor of management being like going through a tunnel; this intimates periods of chaos, blockages, changed situations, coping with the untypical which arises during the period

of problem solving. It implies that giving clarity is about finding a path, un-jumbling the issues, it hints that for him at the outset things can look muddled.

In line 302, IC moves to an exposition of further issues he has had to "manage". What follows is a formulation of IC's understanding of the culture of the "health service". His orientation to it is as a resource for members, a "social account". He characterises it as a rationale for "not doing things." IC orientates to the problem of stereotypical conceptions held by members of the health service, not as something members want to change but as something they wish to hold on to, that it is used as "an excuse for not doing things," line 303. This implies IC faces the problem not just of people who organise good reasons for not doing things, but that the excuse is culturally located. This is offered at the normative level, "I believe that people always have a social account as to why we shouldn't do things", line 304-5.

We hear IC's work is at the level of changing shared meanings, taken for granted assumptions and categorisations of reality held by his staff. He establishes an explicit need for him to redefine just what the health service is about, because the term has come to mean "not doing things." As it exists at present, he says, "it is used by us as an excuse". Thus IC legitimates his claim, line 290, that redefining is part of his work. Here is a manager recognising that a major concern of his work was attempting to change the meaning that work in the health service held for people.⁹

On this occasion IC's understanding of the NHS culture is of something convenient and familiar, which people resist changing. An underlying belief is that culture can block change. Such phrases as "we never do this in the health service... never do this in this industry", line 312-3, hints at historical considerations informing current behaviours.

Changing behaviour is about changing people's conception of culture and for IC this is a matter of individuals changing their attitude. This he characterises as "not having the guts," wishing to "avoid expending energy", and "hassle." IC is working from an underlying belief that people will avoid work if they can find an excuse for not doing things, it is almost to imply a theory of human behaviour being inherently cautious, fearful and lazy.

There is a sense that my query "is that a manager's account?", line 308, is inappropriately positioned by the emphatic, "yes. yes" of IC which bounds off further talk on this matter. The repetition emphasises that the query is responded to, and could be found to be a response geared to avoiding being drawn into providing more detail. IC proceeds to explain the culture of his Organisation, retrospectively this establishes my query as an interruption.

Management as moral and ethical

In line 319-20, IC orientates to a belief that the difference in attitudes is not because of his position; he makes clear that he has "never operated any differently even "when he worked in the system." His formulation continues, clearly orientating to a belief that it is the correct way to operate. IC makes explicit that it is not the General Management programmes that caused the change. One has a distinct sense that he wants me to see the change as his doing.

In line 324, IC employs again the interactional device of posing a question, "if you were to say to me," an interesting resource to legitimise a further exposition and a change of direction in his account. IC explores his own experience; "knowing about the business", "growing up in it" and locates it as a reason for his way of operating; a reason suggestive of the uniqueness of his actions. IC reveals a sensitivity to how this talk might be received, line 326; "perhaps this sounds immodest" prefacing the up and coming talk.

For IC an ability to "pick things up from somewhere else and make them work" characterises his mode of management. This serves as an introduction to a story about his "younger days." This story is legitimised by the fact that it refers to the essence of management. It educated him about "managing people". He offers the belief that "that's what it is about at the end of the day." Interactionally IC obtains space to tell the story by setting up the talk as significant; his "most important experience."

The story sets the authority for his managerial style in a real life story which has the teller, IC, as participant in the event. What seems significant to IC is not just the topics of these stories but that they are lessons from life; it is these that have resulted in him managing as he does. What it offers in the account is a view of management as "getting people to do things" by changing ones "approach, style". IC quite expectedly has that adaptability!

The tale establishes some parameters for his subsequent work in the account, which is to distinguish himself from "the vast majority of Health Service managers." Through this formulation of his style IC's account is morally implicative for the character of Health Service managers as a group. He perpetuates the reputation surrounding NHS managers whilst setting up within the account a telling of how he is different from them.

I provide the perfect invitation for IC to pursue his topic; "so is your management style as adaptive?", line 335, and obtain an assessment by IC of his style; "very adaptive..quite unusual.. very very different from the vast majority of Health Service managers." The difference is that his concern is for the patient, line 339; earlier concerns for cost reduction do not surface here. IC sets up a view by the storytelling, lines 339-46 & 362-

374, that suggests his interests are in line with those which lay conceptions of the NHS would see as significant; that is patient care.

IC refers to a number of experiences he has had in his career to authorise his statement that his "values are to put the patient first", line 339. The experiences refer to situations where people are deprived of care through "stubbornness." IC's characterisation could almost imply that the NHS does not display a proper discharge of responsibilities and expected commitments. It is an interesting characterisation and one IC is eager to disassociate himself from. He reformulates "because we couldn't" to the "Organisation couldn't," line 344, thus disassociating himself from such "stubbornness," "stubbornness" which can be heard as suggesting inflexible, intractable working practices. In line 345-46 by referring to his concern to "eradicate" such "nonsense" as a "pledge" IC establishes an earnestness, setting it up as something like a personal crusade. Such calls from the heart may work up a persuasive account by virtue of an illustration of commitment.

In lines 348-50 IC espouses the rationale for such behaviour as "managerial games that people play in er trying to secure resources." The use of the word "games" invests a sense of competitive amusement which by virtue of being something "that people play" is suggestive of being a characteristic of the body of managers. It is a view of Organisational life as being about individuals fighting to gain resources at the expense of patient care.

Part of IC's definition of resources is that they can be used by people to ends not related to the provision of care. Lines 345-46 refer to his concern to "eradicate" such "nonsense" as "a pledge" IC establishes an earnesty, setting it up as something like a personal crusade. Such calls from the heart may work up a persuasive account by virtue of an illustration of commitment. In line 350 we hear that if IC finds that his managers resources are not being used to provide care; "they get shot."

My question, line 351, which suggests IC has "permeated a number of different levels" to have an interest in the patient is interrupted by IC. He displays a concern to emphasise that his "frame of reference" is about patient care, upgrading his response from "yes" to "oh I do everything". IC seems concerned by my question line 351, his response is delivered with speed and force, does he see me as doubting his word? He orientates to it as if anxious to prove himself as someone who has the patient at the heart of his every action.

IC's reference to an earlier formulation in the account, "the reason why I mentioned about it," line 356 remains indexical; IC appears, line 357-8 to be referring to his account of the re-organisation by virtue of his reference to "changed priorities". Such an explicit concern with the reason for his tales could indicate a feeling that I am not attending to what is

significant in his account. Line 357-8 establishes the relationship between the two priorities; patient care and costs which he introduced in line 156, "we took away a million pounds from non patient areas and put them into patient areas". Thus IC guides the discussion back to some 200 lines earlier and gives additional authorisation for why he formulates his account as he does. Line 358 supports the formulation of a relationship between cost reduction and patient care, IC makes explicit reference to this being "the purpose."

That IC feels "very intense.. almost obsessional about things" seems to characterise this piece of the account as sincere and significant, it seeks to legitimate it by appeal to personal, emotive grounds. The formulation that follows reflects a normative orientation in that it is constructed so as to instruct the hearer, me, in capacity of researcher, to hear the up and coming utterance as a personal account. IC presents a memory of a personal experience for consideration with the skill of a professional story teller (line 362-375). IC's story acts as a synecdoche, as standing to legitimate his actions by locating them in the historicity of life. It could be "triggered" (Jefferson 1978; 220) by my comment some 10 lines earlier, "for you to say you have an interest in the patient," 351, which could be heard as exhibiting some disbelief. In that the story is associated with a personal loss it is highly emotive in its appeal to the recipient. The managerial values IC's espouses, those of patient care, one would assume could not be anything but sincere.

The story,¹⁰ which was really an inspection of IC's own experience and personal trials and tribulations is presented as a philosophy for managing. Exploring its formulation we see that it does not just achieve for IC a picture of his concern for the patient; it serves to reveal his ability to achieve the impossible with resources, and to remind one of the NHS attitude, "It's no use asking, you'll never get anything", line 371.

In line 376-77, IC seems once again concerned with the status of his account and uses the interactional device of posing himself a question, "How do I know what people feel?" Clearly if I do not raise a doubt that IC expects me to then he will ! There is something in IC's account about knowing what is an adequate explanation; about knowing what the hearer might find problematic.

"Organisational balance"

My query, line 381, changes the topic to that of IC's initial assessment of his managers. IC preserves the topic but orientates to the difficulty of relying on people's assessments of others, it "depends very much on what motivates them to say that people are good", line 384, and "the criteria they're using". This recognises a plurality of interests, it infers people can mislead in their assessments, they can have other motives and work with different definitions.

What is significant to IC is that there remains only one member of the top management team he was working with 16 months ago, which IC characterises as "a very big change" in management. That there has been a lot of "comings and goings" seems to make questionable his statement, line 169. Does this reveal that the characterisation IC puts on his work, "that they have kept a stable core" of managers emerges in response to local issues within the talk? There seems a contradiction between managers "coming and going" and the fact that they have "kept a stable core."

It seems IC orientates, line 398, to keeping a stable core of managers as an important feature despite changing the original management team. A further concern is keeping "Organisational balance"; not having people who all want to prove that they are the best in the world. The preface "it seems self evident" is sensitive to a commonly held understanding which I might share and that would have me see his talk as revealing something already known. It also characterises selection in the NHS as failing to conform to 'normal' practice. Line 406-7, "so we did that" confirms that IC does not follow normal NHS practice. He holds on to his turn, speeding up his delivery to move through what is a possible transition point in the turn. IC suggests the forthcoming topic will be interesting, potentially both foreclosing interruption and gaining interactional space by promising something newsworthy is up and coming. IC's preferred practice in selecting a top management team is revealed, selecting "those second in line," a selection based upon an assessment of individuals which looks at what "they've done" and what "they're capable of". The fact that he has appointed people who had been "passed over", "written off" is indicative of past mistakes in selection. The preface, "funnily" emphasises that this is not how selection is usually done.

IC authorises this prescription by the District's position in the performance ratings of the top ten Health Authorities, where they have moved from the bottom to "in the top couple", line 419. IC orientates to the source of this claim, third party comment, with a customary show of modesty! He exhibits a preference for continuing this tale of success, by a secondary elaboration of their position; "I think next year our performance will be even greater". Although it recognises the accomplishment as that of his manager's, line 425, by virtue of earlier formulations which credit IC with both their selection and re-organisation the recipient can do little else but attribute the success to him.

IC extends his turn to account for this success. Line 426 works to set up the interactional space promising something newsworthy, "and the big thing is." We learn that this "important thing" is the provision of feedback; "to tell people when they've done well," or when he is "dissatisfied," "why" and "what they have to do to put it right". IC espouses a logic that telling them ensures mistakes are "rarely repeated", line 431. IC does not explain why mistakes are not repeated and I am left wondering if it is after all some fear? (line 192.)

In line 431-2, IC's admission "there's only one thing where we've done it again" hints of an occasion where a mistake has been repeated. IC's aside "I'll never let it happen again erm and it is something that I shouldn't admit" suggests it is a sensitive issue. IC goes on to expand his account though it remains highly indexical, we do not learn who the "one part of the Organisation" nor what the crisis they repeated was. The work IC does is to formulate an example as an instance of the principle, mistakes are only made once. It is an interesting formulation in that IC sets up something like a troubles telling. This causes IC some interactional concerns, within the account telling, which I take to indicate a concern for recipient design and formulation of an account that makes clear that the trouble will not occur again, line 432.

The account is almost like a testimony¹¹, making available an understanding of his personal experience, it is this realisation that would appear to lead him to state his intent, "I'll never let it happen again", lines 432 and 436, in a manner which by the force of its utterance and its repetition is hearable almost as a vow. By an interrogation of his own experience IC has a resource perhaps to authorise his assertion that mistakes are not repeated. It recasts it in terms of a lesson of life that has been learnt.

Troubles talk¹² a "crisis" or "overdeveloping"?

The pause that surrounds IC's declarative statement, line 436, provides it with illocutionary force, and provides me, as recipient with an opportunity to take up the next turn. I ask "What was the crisis?", line 347, which receives an interesting response from IC. He orientates to my characterisation of it as "a crisis". He re characterises it; for him it is "overdeveloping", not a crisis. The distinction, whatever it might be, is critical. What is interesting is that in formulating my question I have employed the very term IC has used some 2 lines earlier. It points to IC's self conscious interest in the use of language and a concern that his account is understood in a specific way. It reveals a self conscious concern for the management of meaning.

The formulation of it as a "crisis" would seem to influence the point of his tale. The crux of IC's account, we learn, would seem to be that his action averted what was "nearly a crisis", it was "put right within ten days of the signs appearing", line 441. In a retrospective analysis of the interaction it seems my mischaracterisation could have jeopardised the crux of IC's tale. One can expect IC to recognise a situation of crisis as one which requires particular care when being talked about. If troubles exist it attributes to the manager a burden of responsibility or blame.

What is worthy of attention is the interactional skill with which IC cleverly distinguishes his problem from being a "crisis", and sets up a hearing of his action which would see it as a "normal, natural trouble," part of the normal body of duties expected of a Senior

Manager. IC thus achieves an account of troubles whilst also allowing for their resolution. Given that commonsense dictates that troubles exist in any Organisation it is reasonable that IC's account should orientate to them and what more skilful than an account that actually sets up a prescription of managing that allows for their resolution almost before they become troubles!

The several extended pauses that follow IC's correction suggest that he seems hesitant to sustain his consideration of the problem. He offers a consideration of it, provoked perhaps by my further questioning and perhaps an uncomfortableness with the pauses that ensue. The analysis focuses not on the Organisational ramifications of the particular case but on the sense IC makes of it. The problem and solution is presented as lying fairly and squarely with those who choose to depart from the official way. In line 440 "we spotted....the signs appearing" shows how managers' recognise features of their world which stand as proxy for how things are, and are taken as indicators of other happenings.

Remedial action for IC is understood to be a bringing back to the official structures; the unit monitoring system and its attendant programmes rather than any suggestion that the efficacy of the existing nature of Organisational arrangements and relationships should be questioned. (A possibility suggested indirectly by the concerns of several of IC's direct reports, raised during a subsequent meeting to review the Districts 10 year strategy.) Through this exposition IC would seem to be commenting that a measure of doing the job is adherence to systems.

Lines 449, "it was all because they'd mucked up their programmes.." has the effect of placing a distance between IC and a state of affairs in such a way as to de-emphasise personal agency. In this context I want to suggest that the lines instruct the hearer to play down any consideration of the part that IC has played in the overdeveloping.

IC sets up a felicitous re-orientation to the changes mentioned earlier in his talk. He proffers that "traditionally nobody would have known until we had a big problem", line 452-3. This retrospective index implicates the hearer with a need to consider how things were, for it appears IC had in mind after all an association of these ways of working with the changes he had made.

IC proceeds with a passionate disclosure, lines 453-66, to delineate why this near crisis will not happen again. By his assertion that "that'll never happen again because people were told in no uncertain terms," line 456, IC ascribes himself a power of rebuke. As a resource for foreclosing any concern that this "crisis" might reoccur, it is an interesting orientation, strangely at odds with his comment, line 491, that he told them that they "were still the best in the country". Its style of delivery, not captured by the transcript, suggested an emotionally charged account, one which seemed strangely inciduous. There

was something in its broken delivery and unfinished sentences that seemed to suggest that IC was having difficulty editing this recounting.

That "it was quite interesting" suggests an odd detachment from the events; it depicts the event as worthy of attention. I hear IC as referring to his interest in what the staff expected; an expectation that they may lose their "interest", their job (line 462), that they see him as a "toughie" (line 497).

My characterisation, line 473-474, of his involvement with the "community team" as skipping levels, is a comment which is seriously entertained by IC. The equivocalness of lines 475-76 suggests there is some delicacy involved for IC in accounting for skipping levels. IC's orientation suggests his understanding that to "skip levels" is not an assumed right. There is an understanding that one manages through the hierarchy, line 479. It is notable that in the account that follows, lines 479-484, IC can be seen as making available a number of devices for formulating his preferred reading as to why he did skip the levels. I would argue that this could be read as orientating to the right to skip levels; to manage over a "unit GM" if the problem is "big"; if it establishes good practice (lines 482-4 "to let people know I was constantly looking "...." to let people know they'd offended the game plan.") The choice of the word "offended" personalises their action depicting the team as having moral, human qualities.

There is an equivocalness in the account, nowhere more apparent than in IC's orientation to a view of management as giving encouragement, line 491. Offering a rendering of his speech to the managers IC utilises a resource that places me as direct recipient of the address. Given the manner of delivery; IC was standing up at this time, his speech paced and tone authoritative, this had the characteristics of a motivating speech, lines 489-492. This construction thus closes IC's concern with troubles. He locates the reason for this telling in the context of a concern for his image, an image of a 'toughie', 497. The reason for this image is attributed to the work he has "had to do in the first year", he makes available that this is not his natural style but what the situation demands, line 497. In making this point IC can be seen as sensitive to how he is perceived. It points to image work as a practical issue in his management work; managing people's particular image of him is not just a practical concern of accounting to a researcher but one he has had to address in his daily work.

Following the silence around line 497, my question introduces a new interest as to where the main arenas of management activity are. In response to my question, IC makes a distinction between talk with the Chairman and talk with his Chief Officers, though it is not clear why he understands them to be different. IC works up a view of one to one meetings as the basic activity of management relying upon an illustration stemming from his experience of "a friend" sharing the same philosophy; a friend who, we learn,

"worked for Unilever and came into the Health Service," line 507. This identifier seems to re-orientate to IC's earlier concerns, to validate his theories as having practical import both within the NHS and business in general (which I take Unilever to stand for). The philosophy is that a Senior Manager should not be the decision maker but a judge of the "quality of the decision;" a good decision being one which has "taken into account all the different views that could be expressed on the topic", line 510-511.

IC distinguishes his preferred way of working with people as one to one. My interjection, line 520, "why do you prefer one to ones?" overlaps with his explanation. IC attends to the question, line 521, his "Why?" appearing less a request for clarification, rather it marks the interruption and topic shift. IC proceeds to attend to the question identifying the reason, that people in the group react differently than they do as individuals. The metaphor "herd", line 524, I hear as implying a loss of individualism by group membership, a derogatory characterisation of gregariousness, which continues to be IC's chosen characterisation. IC appears to be making the point that meetings or "forums" are not the ideal sites for the articulation of views and that the decision made in the meeting may be different from those that people really believe. IC authorises this by invoking his experience, lines 528-532. This in turn authorises his right to express people's views as his own, line 533. There is an implicit assumption that he can manage the dynamics of the meeting; to manage the views that are put forward; to get to where he thinks the "vision is."

My suggestion, line 536, that other managers have put forward memos, meetings and reports as the central arena results in IC's definition of what memos and meetings mean to him. By characterising the "arenas of management" as "like the money of management" IC provides a hearing which makes them resources, mediums of exchange. He makes explicit, "they're not central to me." This legitimates IC's move off the topic. Central features of his work are the accomplishment of clarity and shared understandings; "the central bit is when I have a conversation with you about X that you and I go away understanding X and knowing what to do", line 541-42. It is about knowing what the vision is, line 550 and about being clear on how to get there, line 552-53.

Conclusion

Examination of the transcript facilitated the explication not only of the set of preferences informing the interpretation and production of IC's account of his activity; (such matters as how he manages people, his concern for patient care, crisis avoidance, control of costs), but also the ways in which he accomplished the description and evaluation of his particular activities.

On this occasion of "talk about management" it seemed IC was concerned with setting up an account of his operating philosophy which we find to be business orientated with an "almost obsessive" concern for the patient. Given the radical change of management's role within the Health Service and the changes IC had initiated in his District his concern to establish just what were normal and familiar scenes, to espouse just what people took for granted and understood was perhaps not to surprising.

The analysis reveals account making to be serious work. IC is found to rely on a number of interactional devices; not just to make sensible his own experience and recast it in a managerial frame, but to authorise it. Indeed, though it remains analytically rather difficult to locate, in exploring IC's account I am left with a belief that IC has a self-conscious concern with the formulation of his account. A concern for smoothing the way to following topics, of finding the right words. We find an awareness of possible considerations and exigencies influencing the reciprocity of the account. For example IC is found to design his account with respect to a sense that it might not be found to be an account of managing a business, and that the NHS might not be seen as a business. This is felicitous for such a concern reveals what the category "being a business" consists in for IC. IC orientates to themes of customer, leadership, culture and change, but unlike AC it is less a view of a rational model of management, one that finds management to be far more contingent on fate, individual experience and competencies.

The work of the preceding Chapters of Part 2 has sought to explicate the conversational orientations and sense-making activities employed by selected managers' accounting for their work. In the following chapter, Chapter 9 I want to explore to what extent such an enterprise has been successful.

Notes

¹ IC propagates an interpretation of his work which one expects to be in line with his objectives. As these have changed might not his language of necessity change? Was this an instance of a manager checking out how he would make sense of his management by a new vocabulary? The very term "General manager" indicated changes in the NHS, following the Griffiths report with its quite damning criticisms in the 1980's of NHS management.

² Reading the literature on management in the NHS (Mark & Scott 1992), indeed in the Public Services in general (Willcock & Harrow 1992) there is recognition of a partial revolution in how Public Services are currently managed. Challenges in delivery (Holtham 1992), in facing the consumer (Harrow & Shaw 1992) in how they are monitored (Selim & Woodward 1992). Much academic literature on the NHS for example Stewart (1985, 1987/8), Mark & Scott (1992) focuses on the change in management. They suggest change along the lines of management in the public sector. Change which Robbins (1988) and Stewart (1985) talk about being for the managers a need to change the culture and "system of meanings".

³ A number of different externalising devices or ways of constructing out-there-ness have been documented: Smith (1978), Woolgar (1988). Here IC uses the device of third party comment to achieve a display of a lack of personal interest or motivation.

⁴ Harrison (1989) mentions the need for General Managers in the NHS to attempt to alter the way the staff perceive the NHS; a need to make them see it as like the public sector, with responsibility for costs, for customer care and quality of service.

⁵ Observing IC it became apparent that he was highly competitive, in particular with respect to the position of other Health Authorities in the "monthly league" of published NHS figures. Indeed the Times survey of top Health Authorities published during my period of observation was to cause many discursive exchanges between IC and his management.

⁶ Support for this hunch comes from the fact that during my time within the Organisation observing one of IC's direct reports I had seen IC on a number of occasions. These were times when he would arrive, often unexpectedly, and address the staff and on each occasion he had offered similar accounts relying on the analogy of being a business, of life, of management being like a football team, stories of critical incidents in his past had coloured his account. In fact from observation it appeared IC was concerned with image making. He was setting the vision in place, part of this was by making personal appearances and speaking face to face to groups. They were Mintzberg's (1973) "figurehead" and "spokesman" roles. IC was concerned with making himself visible, both within the authority and outside of it. In his own words, he said "I am required to fulfil social and inspirational requirements in order to ensure my ideas are taken on board(.) if people hear your philosophy then you have some chance of them listening." IC acts in a public relations capacity outside of the Organisation, but he lobbies for his own ideas within, concerned with transmitting his direction to individuals within the Organisation as well as outside. His concern with his image in the region seemed apparent in his appearances and interviews such as on the local television station (shown 20/2/91). On this occasion painting a not dissimilar image of managerial excellence, financial astuteness and "exceptional achievements in the field of patient care."

⁷ I note as Lynch (1985) observes of scientists, in the daily interactions such an interjection as this would usually have received only the briefest acknowledgement. The “tour” quality of the interaction being no longer relevant.

⁸ Using my knowledge of IC’s activities during his 16 months as GM it is possible to make some sense of IC’s comment. That doing “nasty things” refers to taking decisions on Organisational issues that have consequences for individuals. More specifically it referred to decisions to close two rural hospitals and one large residence for the mentally ill, the result being a “substantial” reduction in staff numbers and inevitable redundancies. The rigidity seemed to refer to the ability to remain resolute in the face of pressure from individuals; the opposition he was facing in announcing these closures and in particular the associated redundancies of “an undisclosed number of staff.”

⁹ How is this done? Mitchell (1985) notes that

“the underlying notion throughout the managers job is to shape the person and his or her values of effort, productivity, teamwork and striving for excellence.. it is done not through fact or conviction but through myths, fables and fairy tales.” pg 352-3.

Robbins (1988) & Stewart (1985) both find this to be a significant part of the role of the GM in the NHS.

¹⁰ According to Rehbein (1980) reported in Davis (1986) there are three general types of stories; heroic tales, strange occurrences and stories of suffering. In this particular occasion of story telling the interpretative structure appears to fall between both a tale of suffering and that of a heroic account.

¹¹ Jones (1986) looks at the accomplishment of testimony from an ethnomethodological perspective

¹² According to Jefferson and Lee (1981) “troubles talk” is talk about stressful events, those that may be disruptive of people’s everyday lives. These events are relatively familiar and capable of local or self management and the troubles teller doesn’t necessarily seek their resolution.

*"There is it seems to us, at best only a limited value
in the knowledge derived from the experience.
The knowledge imposes a pattern and falsifies,
For the pattern is new in every moment.
And every moment is a new and shocking valuation of all we have been"*

East Coker T.S.Eliot

Chapter 9- Reflections on the work of Part 2

For researchers concerned to capture managerial work it has alluded easy description. Indeed one is left wondering how the managers themselves can make sensible their work amongst the brevity, fragmentation and high levels of verbal communication that characterises their activities. Yet on talking with the managers about their work it appeared to me that making sense of what they did, did not pose any great problem. Indeed the accounts they gave were inherently coherent and sensible. If the researcher interested in management finds understanding and describing the managers' work to be problematic then why should he not go to the 'expert'? ¹

This is the step I took in the preceding chapters that comprise Part 2. The question now is, what analytic purchase has such an enterprise of listening to the managers' talk about their work brought to our understanding of management? Is it enough to say it is of interest for revealing the manager, as "native", enquiring into his world?

Research makes much of the fact that there is never a sense of completion or boundary in the manager's work. One has the feeling that issues were always more complex, more entwined; that routine was rare. This was interesting. When called upon to account for their work how was it that they somehow managed to transform it into what, in some instances, was a picture of an orderly, uneventful pattern of events?

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 begin to develop an analytic approach which affords us some insights into how the managers accomplish a description & explanation of their work and into just what features of their work they choose to orientate to in order to construct an "adequate" account? These are found to exhibit a surprising vagueness and lack of precise definition or clarity. It was to offer empirical support for Barnards (1938) comments that

"the administration of affairs proceeds on the basis of limited fictions, working hypotheses, practical assumptions and highly symbolic expressions, which are local, special or technical within a particular Organisation." pg 292

I want in this chapter to relate the material elicited from the transcript in a more direct way to a consideration of;

a) How the account unfolds.

The accounts are found not only to provide instructions for their interpretation but also for the authorisation of their facticity. They were convincing & recognisable as "talk about management". Such a coherent & persuasive account suggested work at this conceptual level has already been done to shape the particular hearing. To explore the construction of these narratives is to point to those practices employed in "doing accounting."

b) The managers' verbal depiction's & preferred orientations.

In Chapter 5, I suggested that exploring the managers' accounts could point to something of what it means to these individuals to be a manager; the constructions they place upon their life.

The moment is thus opportune to reflect on whether the work of Chapters 6, 7 and 8 has indeed achieved such insights.

Finding a reporting language

An initial concern in writing this chapter is to organise some of the significant findings (the outcomes of Chapters 6, 7 and 8) in a way which does justice to the individual managers conceptions of his or her work.

The first step of necessity entails finding a suitable reporting language to organise the observations; adequate at the level of meaning as well as grammar. It was an attempt to find a conceptual organisation that was empirically available within the data.

This proved difficult. There were various possibilities; one could fit the manager's depiction's of management back to a number of conceptual frameworks such as a sense of Self, of Organisation, of Life. This would have provided a preliminary analytic framework for organising the chapter; but on closer examination it did not seem sufficiently discriminating of the stock of descriptors and preferences the managers orientated to; nor did it highlight the noticing that when one looks at the narratives as a collectivity they seem to suggest some level of similarity & difference in terms of the type & coverage of descriptions. I needed an analytic framework which did not commit me to transforming the depiction's in advance to a shared-in common stock of descriptors & preferences and a reporting language which left the individuality of these narratives intact, allowing movement between the particulars of the data & more general or theoretical concepts.

Such a reporting language would restore the individuals to centre stage, whilst rendering accessible the features of managerial life as conveyed by the selected instances of "talk

about management" in a manner sensitive to the way such features are produced, sustained and changed.

a) How the accounts unfold.

The managers' accounts of their work have something of the qualities of narratives, that is an order that connected their description of events and activities, a story telling quality. In addition analysis reveals that these accounts have the character of "versions"² about them, that is they represent the tellers point of view, despite the fact that they were at times framed within the 'agenda' set by my questions.

In the analysis that forms Chapters 6, 7 & 8 it appears that the managers rely on my having some preconception of what management is about that is to say in the main they do not assume their work will be "anthropologically strange" to me. On occasions it appears that the managers versions are sensitive to certain preconceptions that they expect me to hold. What is interesting is that in orientating to this "alternative version" they point out something of what, for them, this alternative view consisted in. Further, if the managers deviate from this it appears they must do some work in terms of establishing the propriety of their own version of management.

Thus we see IC, Chapter 8 orientate to a conception of Health Service management as different from, indeed inferior to management of a private sector Organisation. In the process of setting up his management as like that of managing a business he makes available something of his understanding of what being a business manager consists in. This example not only indicates the significance to these managers of "alternative versions" but reveals a concern on their part for how they are perceived and their actions interpreted.

From the work of Chapters 6, 7 & 8 I identify a number of practices by which the accounts are constructed: formulated so as to provide the recipient with a preferred version, preferred that is by the managers. It is to these that I now wish to turn. My comment is presented under the following provisional headings. They are provisional in that they represent my choice of subheadings given the practicality of needing to organise the presentation of these findings. Others might have organised this section differently.

- (i) formulating a 'gloss'
- (ii) managing reciprocity of the account
- (iii) the use of stories
- (iv) the authorisation of the accounts.

(i) Formulating a 'gloss'.

During the accounts the managers can frequently be seen to be "saying in so many words what they are doing". This inspection of the sense of the particulars that they have furnished reveals a sensitivity on the part of the managers to the sense that is made of their accounts. These formulations reflect a normative orientation; a concern to make explicit just what the characterisation work is that they are doing, to sum up just what point they have made. They are offering the recipient a 'gloss'. Typical of such devices are; "It comes back to giving them the direction that I've been given, that's our end goal" (AC, Chapter 6, line 428) and "I actually think its all about leadership style" (IC, Chapter 8, line 182).

In this way the account is constructed so as to instruct the hearer in how to remedy the indexicality of the account; such formulations propose themselves as the proper characterisation, the proper gloss of a prior piece of talk. This is analytically interesting for when this occurs we see it offered as an adequate gloss for a particular explanation or description. The events that they gloss are recoverable through inspection of the preceding talk. A line of regard is disclosed. Thus in line 418 we learn that for AC "giving direction" relies upon his having accomplished various activities such as setting up a business plan (line 113) reorganising his direct reports (290-1), building a team (line 394).

Such formulations also provide for the coherence of the accounts; that is they "sum up" & thus bring a stretch of talk to conclusion. It seems that contrary to the traditional conception of interviews³ these managers can control the shape of the interaction, formulating the gist of their preceding talk, formulating the up and coming talk and controlling the topic change. Consider the gloss' by AC Chapter 7, line 106 "So my whole function is to establish direction, communicate the direction & follow up, that's all I do for a living, end of story." This can be heard to quite clearly select topic closure.

It occurs to me that this pointed to a concern on the managers part that I should hold to a view of management not substantially different from their own. This might be something of a convention of management behaviour; a requirement that in order to gain support, elicit cooperation & agreement they have "to take the recipient with them."

This sense, that the managers are constructing a preferred version of their work, is most explicit when my 'gloss' as recipient is incorrect/insufficient. For example in line 440, Chapter 8, IC's reference to a trouble with his staff as a "crisis" when employed by me and offered back to him is problematic. Having a crisis does not appear to be part of his preferred version, an unacceptable characterisation of his work, a hearing to be explicitly avoided. The result is a felicitous correction of my characterisation by a complete re-

working of the scenario. A picture of a crisis avoided. That the crisis is avoided is found to be authorised by the very manner of the accounts construction. [This reveals the ability in verbal accounts for re characterising, making retrospective sense of events. A point I will return to.]

Displays of preference such as this with regard to the appropriacy of inferences & interpretations to be drawn from particular explanations suggests that the accounts may be seen as set up to illustrate & justify a point rather than to provide grounds from which the narrative is to be objectively interpreted. Thus IC's formulation of General Management in the NHS being like management in any business seems to illustrate & justify the point that he is worthy of the classification 'manager' & a competent one at that.

What has interested me going back to the data, of which I am a co-participant is the absence of any disagreement on my part with the formulations. Why do I as recipient align to their formulations? Is it just because of the fact that these are occasions where the managers are privileged to offer definition, or was it because I am in awe, made timid by their status? The data itself yields a seemingly adequate explanation without the need to import a sense of underlying motivations. This interactional submissiveness is found to be produced in the occasion of interaction. Not only am I not invited to comment, to offer my view of the matter under consideration, but my comment is invariably found to be inappropriate and reformulated.

It could be that to question the managers' formulations would jeopardise the sense of the talk thus far; may stop the discussion, initiate a restarting of the topic, or challenge the manager's competence to make sense of his work. Lack of confirmation might then be seen as threatening the occasion of "talk about management." Lines 617-631, Chapter 7, illustrate the interactional consequence of my failure to align with the managers' formulations. The consequence of my pursuing an issue that only I seem to consider worth attending to meets with some interactional difficulty. It can be conjectured that the response from AC "Yes otherwise he'd be a clerk not a manager.. We kill that here. (2.0)" is directed at my persistent question, which "drives" the manager into a quite aggressive explication of why it is not worth considering. As he proceeds to try and get off the topic AC formulates my line of enquiry as quite clearly not a matter appertaining to management.

ii) Managing reciprocity of the accounts.

As the above practice of 'glossing' illustrates on exploring the transcript one has a sense that at a gross level of description I, as recipient, am being managed. At times this is made explicit in the pattern of interaction. That is to say the manner in which these

accounts will be received is managed by the very process of their construction. There is a sense that the account sets instructions for its hearing.

There is a sense on listening to the managers talk that they are creating a preferred version, that to borrow from Garfinkel and Sacks (1970) for each manager

“whatever he says provides the very materials to be used in making out what he says.” page 339

which I hear variably as

“their slogan, their task, aim, achievement, brag, sales pitch, justification, discovery.....” page 334-335

It occurs to me that the ability to accomplish a version along ones preferred lines could be important in the daily work of the manager, where getting ones opinion across, managing the encounter are critical to the shape of the future work, to occasions of negotiation and decision making. In terms of these instances of managers' talk about their work with a researcher they serve to suggest that these occasions do not work in the accepted manner of the research interview. Indeed it supports an argument I put forward in chapter 5 that these are not just researcher driven question & answer sessions.

Taking as an example, Chapter 7, AC reveals a felicitous management of the encounter, almost before its outset. He displays interactional skill in managing the meeting's shape not just during its course but by projecting it's shape at the outset. Line 1, “Okay we'll move along quickly” sets the tone of the interaction; the concern to shape it around an Organisational document fig (v), establishes a preliminary boundary around the topic areas.

The managers are not above directing the account, even by posing some questions to themselves and thus setting up interactional space to orientate to their preferred topic. Examples such as AC, line 124, IC line 133, are typically of the style; “What when somebody says project manager what are they talking about?”, DB line 330. Such questions set up a proposal for the next topic and alert the recipient to an issue that is worth attending to.

In the interview with IC, line 70, where he interrupts with “we're going on to that” it seems that his concern to control the discussion might come from some clear sense of what he wants to say in the meeting. Here I receive something like a reproach, because my question, line 68, has either preempted an issue he wanted to introduce or interrupted his current utterance. It has disturbed some sense of structure that IC is working with.

What is clearly apparent is that just as, if I raise a question the managers don't like they will let me know⁴, also if I don't raise an issue they consider important they will. A frequently used device that interactionally accomplishes this is the use of what I refer to

as "conversation extenders", such as IC line 167, "what has amazed me about it" and DB line 366 "the other thing is."

Borrowing from the work of Greatbatch (1986) we can identify several procedures which the managers employ to exercise some control over the topical development of the talk, to obtain the opportunity to talk about an issue that is outside of the established topic.

"Post-answer agenda shifting," as Greatbatch refers to it, can be found in the account. Here the manager moves away from the topical agenda that I have set up after, rather than prior to, the production of answers. For example IC, chapter 8, creates an opportunity for himself lines 54-60;

54 LW: something I've noticed as common to the managers is their technical

55 IC: yes erm we're quite different because we are generalists.....

58 LW: mhm

59 IC: but as we're talking in this case about a general management issue. I mean in many cases my role is about...

Here IC indicates a topic shift after he has first responded to my question, though by line 59 he possibly denies the relevance of the topical agenda of my question and establishes one that he considers relevant. Over lines 150-168, IC again obtains space to talk about an issue which is really outside the relevance established by my question.

151 IC: my biggest task is getting the right people with the appropriate skills in the right place?

155 LW: Has that been perhaps your most major concern?

156 IC: Yes it has, I've reorganised everything (.) taken a million pounds of our management costs....

166 basically the thing that's amazed me in our position is that two years ago the same people that were here with one or two changes...

Frequently I conform to the managers' topic shifts; rarely do I produce subsequent questions to re-establish my own prior areas of interest⁵ which might have been minimally attended to.

Following Greatbatch (1986) we can notice that "pre- and post-answer agenda shifting" is always produced in conjunction with an answer. This works interactionally so that we do not find the managers fail to answer, nor do we find that they speak out of turn.⁶

Upon analysis it seems the managers frequently offer only the minimum of alignment to my questions. Thus in response to my question, line 167, "so you've built a team up?" IC aligns with it by re characterising my question, "that's what we're trying to do," but then moves on, "the thing that's amazed me." Such a preface proposes what is up & coming as

worth attending to, thus authorising the deviation from the question. I allow such deviations by failing to correct the misunderstanding.

On this occasion the device works to allow IC the opportunity to reveal the Organisation's change from a "two million overspend" to a "two million surplus." The claim of surprise, line 170, works to imply a naivety in how to establish the cause of the success. Given the work of lines 159-176 one seems to be positioned to see him as a very modest man, one who will not listen to others' commendations. However, given line 159, one has a sense that this is a false, indeed a recipient-designed display of modesty, for even as outsider one is adequately informed to link the success to IC, particularly when one learns the change has occurred in the last 18 months & he has been in position 16 months.

What is harder to live with is that I, as recipient do not display resistance or acquiescence to such management. Indeed in this particular instance I fall into line; interactionally I provide the lines (177, 193) that allow IC to continue this talk about success. I, the researcher, allow him to manage me and not, I would add, in a manner of any great subtlety !!

In talking with the managers I was conscious of a tension between being co-conversationalist (participant) with ideas, questions and interests to explore and a desire not to interfere (not to participate) for fear of imposing my as non-experts definition of the situation. Further, even minimal involvement, that is to say just following the conversation, seemed in tension with my ability to "stand back" and observe the activity itself. Resolution of these troubles came in part from the approach itself; provision of a transcript allows for the "material demonstration" of the occasion studied and the opportunity to revisit and rework the sense of events. Analysis in terms of conversational structures borrowed from CA makes possible a reading of the work from within the situation itself. Thus as analyst I am sensitive to my involvement in the occasion of account making. That is to say I recognise that what sense is made on the particular occasion is a collaborative affair.

In doing so it seems evident in the interaction that at times I might well have breached "disclosure norms" concerning what the managers were prepared to talk about with someone in my position. I certainly retained a sense of what one did not request them to talk about. AC's dismissal of my request for him to recount times when he faced conflicts of interest in his work, line 525, in particular my concern with occasions where his career is in conflict with Organisational interests, implies that this is not an appropriate topic to focus upon. With IC my persistent reference to the budget overspend as a "crisis" illustrates an inappropriate characterisation that causes some interactional trouble, line 445.

Those interested in the operation of power might argue that the asymmetry of relations between researcher & manager that we find is to be expected given the institutional structure and the differences of status, gender, age and competence between researcher and researched. Such an interest has not been the focus of my analysis. The interest has been in the interaction as occasions of social activity, an interest in how these occasions are managed interactively.

What I found empirically hard to locate, yet at some gross level had a sense of particularly from IC's account, was that by this managing of me the managers were not just managing my response but also the impression I had of them. Work in CA such as Atkinson (1983) , Greatbatch & Heritage (1991) has suggested that audience responses to speeches are strongly influenced by the rhetorical construction of the speaker's messages. Although somewhat premature I want to put forward a suggestion that by exploring the rhetorical construction of the managers talk one might obtain some analytical purchase as to why I find that certain of these occasions of talk, in particular IC's account, appear as persuasive and convincing.

The sense that the managers' talk is rhetorical, can be confirmed by exploring their use of rhetorical devices.⁷ One particularly frequent rhetorical format to be found in the accounts is the projection of completion. AC, following an account of his day to day activities, does just this; "So my whole function is establish direction, communicate the direction and follow up that the directions being followed. end of story..", line 106. This is offered as a three part list, with repetition of the word "delivery" adding weight and emphasis to the point being made.

A further rhetorical device which was less apparent in the managers' talk is "contrast", where the core assertion is usually made twice, in both a negative and a positive manner. In the accounts the contrast was rarely explicit.⁸ An example, however, is DB, Chapter 6;

27-8 DB: I'm responsible for providing the IT, the total IT service to my customers.

29 LW: yes

30: DB: this defined group in the airline erm but as in any major corporation I can't go off. I have linkages that I should maintain for the corporate good. for my colleague business centres

33: LW: right

34 DB: uhm and indeed for the corporate overall coz you get customers asking for things for themselves which don't necessarily fit the corporate mission.

DB, Chapter 6, and to a lesser extend IC, Chapter 8, employ a rhetorical format "puzzle-solution" ⁹ to emphasise their point. In Chapter 6, lines 101-115 and 128-137 we find DB sets up a puzzle thus inviting me, as recipient, to think of its possible solution, and by the

same token to attend more carefully, perhaps, to his own solution when it is delivered, lines 110, 135-7 and 147.

110 DB:now do I go for what my local people say they want and get on with it. or do I wait for for the centre of IM to say well youknow if we're gonna have something we're gonna have to have something across everywhere....

:

136 DB: [[requires me to. try and make some judgement about whether do I do I penalise my customers. and (0.5) wait for a decision from the centre or do I take the risk and go off on my own.

On hearing IC's account one has a sense of an account of success being built up, which is almost boastful but not quite. Indeed IC displays some quite explicit concerns that his account should not be heard this way. This particular noticing I consider worth attending to here in a brief attempt to suggest one might use the analytic approach developed in Part 2 to make visible this sense that I am being managed, not just in the determining of the structure of the interaction but also in the interpretation I put upon it.

IC's account is chosen as an example for he skillfully accomplishes a telling which characterises himself as something not unlike the "corporate hero", yet at no point does he point directly to his accomplishments. IC effectively neutralises, discounts or eliminates any sense that this is how he views himself. The concern of Part 2 with the social accomplishment of accounts points to the conversational practices by which IC resolves the "problem" of needing to appear detached from any association of himself with success. In exploring IC's account it seems this is accomplished by attempts to erase such a hearing by the manner of the telling; (in particular by the use of metaphor, disclaimers, literal descriptions & topic change.)

Frequently IC sets up a position where the recipient is so positioned as to associate the Organisational success described as inferably the result of his recent appointment as Manager, yet where IC has made no such explicit claim. Thus around line 196 IC uses the analogy of sport to point up the significance of the coach in the giving of direction to a team. If it is the coach who makes a team winners, then as General Manager IC is inferably the reason for the Organisations success, line 173. This is enforced by the fact that in lines 165 & 185 IC identifies his work as "redefining" and making clear what is expected of his management team, the very same attributes he subsequently uses to describe the work of a coach. He thus accords to himself, all the attributes he has set up as characteristic of a coach.

This managing of me as recipient continues, around line 160, when IC makes explicit that he's reorganised everything. He follows this with "taken a million pounds off our management costs," by virtue of the sequential placement of the lines the association is

that it is his doing. However in the lines that follow IC's use of collective pronouns implies a shared responsibility for this success. By line 175, IC seems concerned to disclaim explicitly any association with the success. He makes explicit the very hearing one might normally have given to the account, "most people say well you've come." What follows, line 176, does some interesting work for it sets up this expected hearing as incorrect, "it isn't me, they've done it."

It appears that detailed attention to the accounts construction has indeed exposed a sensitive operation of recipient design, a close attendance on the managers part to balancing the construction of a preferred hearing & management of the recipient. Some claims it seemed were recognised as pushing the recipient too far & work had to be done to restore the legitimacy of the talk. In this instance it seemed for IC to suggest he himself has achieved a million pound saving is such an occasion. Proclaiming one's own success, taking explicit responsibility for Organisational success could be seen as bragging or boasting and is not considered appropriate "talk about management."

(iii) The use of stories

In exploring the construction of the accounts one sees, at times, the managers deploying a storytelling format to present their experiences, particularly IC in Chapter 8. Storytelling as a conversational encounter has been the focus of considerable research¹⁰ but I could find little research concerned with its interactional role as a form of narrative. Sacks' (1978) formulation of stories as "ways of packaging experience" led to me to question why the managers choose this way of shaping up the telling? Did the use of stories play a part in the construction of a preferred version?

It also occurred to me, given that my interest is in the features & preferences the managers regard as relevant to a publically available account, that storytelling could also be a means to another end; that is a point of entry to the characterisations/ orientations the managers place upon their work.

Where occasions of storytelling occur in my data I refer to them in the empirical analysis of the materials in Chapters 6, 7 & 8. I do not afford adequate attention to their detail here purely for pragmatic reasons.

What is interesting about the discovery that managers can shape up an account of their work by recourse to stories is that this is not a conversational practice I associate with the talk of managers. Much of the literature on management seems to ignore the part of story telling in the managers construction of adequate accounts. This way of packaging experience does not offer the rational, factual account or report that one expects to be an accountable part of management; nor is it recognised as emphasising reasoned argument,

accuracy or objectivity. I am not suggesting all the managers have recourse to stories as a means of shaping up an account, but it is to explore an interest in their role as one of the narrative forms exhibited in the accounts for the contribution they make to the version of managerial work constructed.

The accounts exhibit other forms; namely description & reporting which provide for a more factual account. AC's account, almost devoid of story, employs a reporting and a descriptive form- that is a preoccupation with the visible, spatial or surface features of his work. AC works from a memorandum, he does not offer reference to illustrative events rather makes apparent what he does through the identification of principles and prescriptions. For AC this is taken to provide the recipient with sufficient information to understand his work. What AC thinks, feels about his work is not for him an essential part of accounting for it; his work consists in setting the business strategy (lines 160-195), setting a plan (line 261), allocating the work (line 263-5.) For AC describing visual, spatial and surface aspects of events and activities within his work provides enough information for the recipient. There is a heavy reliance on "mutually assumed knowledge"; that is a presumption that I know what "monitoring", "transaction processing" etc consist in.

Reporting is much more a part of DB's account. I use the term report because DB exhibits a concern to organise the account, to edit it and explain it, to make it sensible. DB's account consists in the recounting of a series of events and occurrences; the historical development of the Organisations structure, a recounting of current issues that he faces.

Stories like reports involve a retelling of events that have occurred in the past. For example in Chapter 8, around line 368, IC tells a story of a memorable event in his career. What interested me was what characterised a story? What made it different from other narrative forms? What becomes an issue is just when a past event / episode becomes a story? DB's account reveals reportage of past events, but does it warrant classification as a story or is it a mundane tale?

At one level a story can be characterised on the basis of whether it exhibits a dramatic quality. Davis (1988) suggests

"there will always be a twist, a complication or something unexpected which transforms even the most ordinary happenings into a story-worthy item." pg 145

Polyani (1979) suggests stories contain separate information structures; event, durative description and an evaluative component, this being a characteristic of the story. The managers had a similar character and are frequently found to be tales of problems.

In exploring the story-telling within the manager's accounts a discriminating feature of these occasions is the emotional involvement of the teller. Indeed the occasions of story telling are found to accomplish more than just a reportage of events & I consider it useful to dwell on one particular story for what it accomplishes.

The story offered by IC concerns a tale of his father's discomfort during illness and his pledge to eradicate excuses that managers used to justify non-provision of a service. An initial noticing is that it serves to reveal IC in a particular light, line 365, "so I feel very intense...almost obsessional." This could be taken to suggest that for IC part of a preferred version of management is that he should be seen as morally involved in his work, indeed more than that personally involved; almost a victim of the very atrocities of management he has pledged to eradicate; "my father was ill...he died actually."

At the outset of the story IC focuses the recipients attention on the dramatic potential of the story, sustaining it by the use of intensifiers ('actually', 'incredibly') and, if one hears the tape, by slow, paced, distinct speech. The alternative, a factual construction of the same incident would be quite different, failing to display emotional involvement in the work. By IC's vivid reenactment of what happens the recipient is drawn into the experience. Such involvement may serve to authorise the accounts, particularly given the serious nature of the revelation. It seems locally occasioned to authorise IC's claim to a frame of reference completely dedicated to patient care. Given IC's involvement in the events, his pledge to eradicate such nonsense accords him something of the status of hero, associated with the reduction of suffering, even of fatality.

What is interesting in this particular extract is that IC's concern to authorise his earlier claim, to have a value system which puts the patient first, seems triggered by my response, line 357. It seems to suggest the use of a story to resolve a past interactional trouble. What is it about my response that results in IC's provision of a quite passionately articulated explanation? It seems the trigger could be that my, the recipient's, response is in some way inadequate¹¹ to suggest alignment with the espoused account. In this instance my response, "for you to say that", could by virtue of its detached, objective style be taken as a disclaimer of identification with the point made, thus placing a further onus on the story teller to authorise such a claim; an indication of the manager's concern for the "adequacy" that is the credibility of the account.

What is apparent is that at a gross level of analysis, as troubles tellings the stories can be found to serve two very different purposes. For IC & AC they serve to allow an adjoining account of trouble resolution. Such work authorises a hearing of the managers as problems solvers; almost in IC's case the "corporate hero" & "trouble shooter."

For DB, however, the telling of stories serves to reveal contradictory sets of interests whose solution proves to be problematic for him, thus authorising a version of management work as a "delicate business". In the main DB arranged his stories around the present situation, with one notable exception; the opening story within which the authority for the subsequent version of his work is couched.

This is interesting for the work the story-telling does in tracing out the historical developments that lead to a picture of the current Organisational structure, within which DB is working. This formulation at the meetings outset allows a reading of the source of all troubles as located within the historical development of the Organisation. Given that stories involve the recipient in the events it could be that such an account at the outset of the meeting serves by presenting DB, the teller, in a particular light so that the recipient is aligned with his view of things. The recipient will be in receipt only of those insights that the teller wishes to disclose.

Why did the managers so frequently choose stories to tell me of their work? It occurred to me there may be a number of reasons; Stories, in that they involve a reworking of the event may be a useful device to avoid the need to make sensible to an outsider the local contingencies of the situation and thus in part resolve the problem of the essential indexicality of description. In stories the teller can submerge some aspects of the telling & highlight others as relevant to their concerns. They serve to personalise the relationship between the parties, even create an informality to the interaction. Further as local, contingent & individual accounts stories are difficult to disagree with.

In IC's account where he is confronted with a series of critical events we find an evaluative point which sets up a moral frame and value statement within the telling. In DB's narrative a story concerning changes in his Organisations development accounts for the structure of relationships between the various departments, relationships which shape the very nature of his work.

It occurred to me that within the accounts there is a sense that my response as recipient has been shaped by the tellers very act of telling. This led me to recognise a sensitivity to authorising these accounts. That is to say there is a concern to ensure the recipient acknowledges the story correctly.

IC's heroic/ moral story could work to achieve a response of respect, an inference that he is something of a saviour by reducing suffering. To acknowledge the tale by a less affirmative response, for example a reformulation of the inferences IC bases his story upon, is set up as inappropriate by the very nature of the accounts construction.

This concern with authorisation¹² is not limited to concerns of the occasions of storytelling, it is a concern of the account itself. Indeed there is a circularity here, for the storytelling serves as one device by which to authorise the account.

The managers thus appear to display a set of procedures concerned with establishing something like a "preferred version" ruling out possible alternative versions and discrepant information. I wish to expand this point and for that reason I choose to attend to authorisation in a subsequent section.

To summarise then it is suggested that stories play a role in the management of the accounts' reception and their authorisation. By virtue of the personal nature of story telling they offer a collection of events less likely to be contested by the recipient. In the words of Smith (1978 pg 34) "recollected introspection" of how I heard the accounts suggests that something like a "willing suspension of disbelief effect is operating." I tend to accept the teller of the tale as having definitional privilege, perhaps in part because there is little material with which to contest the story. The story telling seemed to offer a personal element to the interaction by its "conversational" approach, the subjective and individual nature of the disclosures, the disclosures of emotion and self-assessments.

The reader might be asking what this interest in the narrative form of the accounts can reveal about management. After all, everyday explanation can be found to rely on any of the above forms of narrative. What interests me is that particular accounts reveal a preference for one form over the other to "package their experience." This choice seems anything but arbitrary. The chosen form of the account works to control the way the manager's own experiences are defined; it works as a resource to accomplish the preferred version.

(iv) Authorising the accounts

The above analysis begins to demonstrate empirically what I have referred to as the managers' concern with the adequacy of their "talk about management." It supports the claim that these were serious occasions in their work day and has begun to point up the interactional work that needs to be done to offer an "adequate" version. I now wish to turn to a further feature of the accounts, their authorisation.

The accounts construction indicates a concern for just how believable the accounts are. This "talk about management" is not just any telling but one which the managers appear to assume will be judged against some external standard for its legitimacy. That I, as recipient, might bring to the meeting a different version or source of disjunctive information is not ruled out. The fact that I have given them the privilege of definition by asking them to talk is not for them sufficient; they must do work to "authorise" their

version. Here it seems for the managers the problem is accomplishing the facticity of these accounts, assigning their claims a legitimate history. This legitimate history is for IC provided by the changes in the NHS since the Griffith report, in particular the change in management structures; for DB it is coached within the framework of restructuring the Organisation. For AC it is located in the Organisational procedures and business practice of financial planning.

What is exciting about the data is that it is this very concern to authorise the accounts that reveals the normative orientation of the managers. The clearest instance of this comes early in IC's account. He reveals an orientation to management or certainly good management as being management of a business. It appears that for IC the fact that he manages in the NHS does not place him in the category of managing a business. It appears IC must resolve this trouble by setting his work up as like that of a business. The analysis enables us to see what for a practising NHS manager being a business consists in, primarily financial responsibility.

With AC too, the criteria of doing managerial work in part revolves around financial issues. It could be that this talk in financial terms in itself legitimises the account. The language of business consisting in talk of strategic plans, budget, quality service, revenues etc. AC's version further illustrates how the structure of the telling can in itself authorise the account. Firstly that it is structured around an Organisational document (fig vii) sets it within an official frame, line 281; "it's a discussion document much as we're using it now." Secondly AC's whole account has a coherence about it, achieved by the work he does to integrate each stage of the account to the prior one, earlier explanations authorise up & coming accounts. This is most visible between lines 159 & 261 when AC talks about the setting of the direction. Indeed he even manages to achieve, by virtue of his position as senior manager, to establish both the legitimacy of following formal Organisational prescriptions, yet also to put himself in the position to have some say in these very conditions under which he has to manage. As senior manager he has "an input" into his own objectives.

A feature of IC's account I referred to earlier was the telling of stories concerning episodes in his life. They were orientated to as illustrative; practical lessons, cautionary tales. Was this manner of conceptualising their world doing anything else in the accounts? Pomerantz (1984) makes the point that in conversation the practice of telling how I know

"shows that people routinely attend to their bases of knowledge or sources when there is doubt about what is true." pg 1

It occurred to me that the managers' grounding of their accounts in a series of "just so stories" could reflect a similar concern. The stories serve to authorise the accounts by orientating the recipient to events which validate the points being made. Thus if DB is

trying to construct an account of his managerial work as the outcome of problems in the Organisations structure then a story of its development provides an interpretative scheme for up and coming reportings. It could be a resource to deal with those issues which in managerial terms it is not acceptable to raise explicitly; in DB's instance to criticise the official expectations of his role and in IC's to proclaim ones own virtues. To question these personal experiences was to question their interpretation as expert. (As well as being contrary to the objectives of the interview, which was for them to talk about their experience.) Further, by using tales of direct experience the managers made themselves strictly accountable only for representing their own experiences.

Reference to a third party view provides an authority for the version, independent of the managers' own view. This structural frame is particularly evident in IC's account, such claims as "people tell me to", line 13 and "I had a friend who worked in Unilever," line 514.

Smith (1978) observes that accounts which merely appear to be describing the world as it is are generally taken to be

"more persuasive than accounts motivated by the special interests or psychological disposition of the speaker." pg 34

DB's account begins with such a description, locating the historical development of his Organisation and establishing his position as operating within a framework of Organisational structure. Having established such a structure DB is then able to authorise his telling by reference to his position within this wider framework.

IC offers the solution to the puzzle "what is management?" that my research interest has set up couched in terms of an account of managing a business, a concern for the patient, a picture of success through facing up to a tough reality.

AC's preference is to present an organised, logical series of activities in a controlled operation, a unitary conception of a "people orientated" Organisation. With DB management is a matter of "balancing" a plurality of interests in an environment of uncertainty & equivocality. It is this very variation in the versions that the managers offer which leads me to suggest these occasions of "talk about management" can afford such a rich insight into the amalgam of conceptions of membership orientated to by Senior managers.

Garfinkel in his study of jurors rules observed that the search for motives comes after the act for which the motive is sought. He goes on to make a point about the organisational aspects of action, that people are called upon by one another to give justification for their decisions, to show them to be rational and so forth. This was certainly a feature of the managers' world. The managers' accounts of their work were concerned with telling not

just what they did but why? The account occasioned managers to enquire into the reasons for their actions, to offer what they took to be satisfactory, preferred explanation.

On listening to IC & AC it seems almost as if they have had occasions before to make public a sense of their work. The accounts are offered with a practiced, at times almost theatrical air. In the case of IC we even learn that he has particular metaphors that he prefers to use; "my favouritathing to relate it to is sport"

Listening to AC's account it has, at times, all the characteristics of a speech; the strength & controlled delivery, the emotive vocabulary; "Just as all countries need leaders all teams need coaches or managers," line 433-4, "My team will function with the thought of my philosophy," line 430.

For DB it seems this occasion of "talk about management" is not so easily accomplished. His talk is noticeably hesitant, broken by amongst other things pauses, displays of hesitancy & restarts. One has the distinct impression that for him accounting for what he does to an outsider is not a frequent nor familiar activity.

The sense one has on listening to IC and AC that talking about their work to people outside of their Organisation is normal practice was born out by observing their daily activities. For IC the public accountability of his role found him frequently addressing the chairman and board of the local Health Authority, the Health Authority Review Committees, the press, various local pressure & staff groups. Like IC, AC was something of a "figurehead" reporting at shareholder meetings, large corporate customer groups and staff addresses.

From the work of Part 1 the capacity to categorise & characterise their work, would seem important to the managers' success in putting an argument across, persuading, negotiating, clarifying. Indeed as one manager said to me "if I can turn project delays into last minute refinements of a superb project then I can avoid disappointing the customer." If they could turn the chaos of crisis into an opportunity for changing work attitudes, then they were managing to accrue maximum advantage from something they could not prevent. That these redefinition's are just verbal would seem significant enough in a primarily verbal world. The ability to define might also mean that the managers' picture of reality, his "vision", can be transferred to others.

An instance of just what this definitional work can achieve is apparent in Chapter 8, around line 440. The instance re characterises an earlier assertion, where managers within IC's Health Authority "were repeating a crisis" to a situation where, by the manner of the accounts construction the event becomes a crisis avoided. Although it has been mentioned earlier it is worth attending to in more depth since the manner of its

construction accomplishes more than just a troubles resolution. It advances a version of good management and authorises up & coming claims of change. Following IC's characterisation of the trouble as a "crisis," I recycle it, line 443, "what was the crisis?" But this, one senses, is not acceptable, by IC's concern to correct my characterisation, line 445, and the illocutionary force by which he presents his response. It appears it is not classified by him as a normal trouble that is acceptable in a version of competent management.

The crisis becomes characterised as a future state of affairs that is never realised. Re characterising it as a 'potential trouble avoided' leads us to find that IC orientates to 'taking-action to avoid a trouble' as appropriate managerial work. There is a sense from the broken delivery that this is a troublesome telling for IC, not made easier by my minimal tokens of alignment which interactionally tie him to continue the explication, nor by my persistence in referring to it as a crisis. There is a sense that for IC his version of good management includes indicating his ability to resolve problems/ troubles; the more serious a trouble he averts the greater the achievement. It must be a trouble telling that can be turned into an experience of value, lines 459, 472 and an experience that can be lived with. Clearly for IC having had a crisis can not be.

b) A preferred version/ a line of regard.

The analysis of the interview's construction displays the managers sensitivity to the version of the work they are constructing. Part of the definition of a version is the notion of a line of regard. In exploring the managers' accounts their preferred line of regard, the preferred depiction's, characterisations and orientations are pointed up.

The work of Chapters 6, 7 and 8 seems to question the claims of much of the social science literature on interviews, that talk elicited in such settings is open to "multiple assertions" even "misinterpretation." It questions it by beginning to demonstrate that members' talk orientates to the provision of a preferred version. It takes up in part Sharrock & Turner's (1978) interest in the anchorage of versions in members' conversational practices and the work of Smith (1978) on the construction of versions.

In the managers construction of a version one can identify not only the practices through which verbal depiction's of their work are accomplished but something of what these verbal depiction's consist in. Though examination of the descriptors reveals a plurality of orientations these nonetheless make available something of the practices and philosophies regarded as acceptable by the managers. This becomes the focus for the next section. Before I move to a consideration of them I would like to underline the local and occasional nature of these accounts.

The examination of the managers' accounts revealed that they are offered not as descriptions tout court, but emerge from and elaborate the managers consideration of particular issues as and when they arise during the course of the meeting. In the instances examined they are found to be inextricably tied up with managers' views regarding their own orientations; the Organisational environment, effective/ ineffective structuring of activities, even current concerns in that day's work. These observations suggest, as Garfinkel (1967) leads us to expect, that people's accounts

"bear the stamp of their practical & normative involvement"

in daily life. Thus it is that these particular versions point up just what these normative orientations consist in.

Developing an interest in managers' verbal depiction's of their work and 'espoused logic's' has not proved an easy task. Garfinkel & Sacks' work has suggested that the problem is that there are an infinite number of categories that may be used to represent any event or activity within the world. For this reason I do not expect to identify something resembling a 'corpus' or a distinct set of conceptions of management.

Indeed this would be at odds with suggestions in my earlier work which recognised that the managers' verbal depiction's of membership are descriptions that emerge from managers' concern with issues of local relevance.

However, in their accounts the managers do seem to subscribe to & share a number of orientations which could offer some indication of senior management work. It seemed managers in different Organisations with different biographies and interests do subscribe to and share some common understandings and preferences. They orientate to the following features;

- the concept of Organisational structure
- the influence of the Organisation upon their work.
- the basis of leadership
- the issue of team management and how to set up an effective team
- the desired mode of orientation, conduct and involvement for their position
- an emphasis on disseminating a vision; being resource, customer and people orientated
- a concern for the way to implement their views
- the assessment of effectiveness with respect to 'direct reports' and self
- the manner of decision making and problem solving
- a philosophy of life and reality

There was a sense of a culturally appropriate version of management. It was important as a manager that one should be concerned for people, the service provision, that one recognises that the customer is sovereign, that one works for the corporate good.

However, even if the managers' accounts reveal a similar set of 'organising frames' the way that the managers deploy to them could be seen to differ for a number of "situated" reasons, incarnate and inextricably embedded in the sense individuals make of their experiences on this occasion.

If, as would seem to be the case with these managers the themes that they choose to orientate to are both personal and occasioned, then the possibility of obtaining a formal array of descriptors from management requires considerable work before we can be sure that we have found culturally appropriate understandings. Any reporting of discoveries from Chapters 6,7 & 8 must therefore aim for a balance between the level of generality in the managers orientation and the individuality of their conceptions. This analysis is thus provisional, making available something of the ethos of the managers, something of the amalgam of conceptions of membership they orientate to.

On the basis of this I identify a number of dimensions, which Jones (1983) refers to as "conventional orientations" ¹³ along which the managers shape up their telling. In exploring these dimensions I focus on the lineaments of each managers version. It reports something like a set of themes, concerned that the managers take centre stage, viewable as individuals with their own personal explanatory agenda.

The adequacy of the attempt as a means to provide a way of organising the empirical observations from preceding chapters remains an issue. However, analytically it seemed possible to identify distinct clusters of orientations present in the managers conceptions and characterisations of their work. Though empirically they may be entwined, they appear sufficiently distinct as to be of some use in organising the data.

They are as follows (though I am conscious others may identify different arrangements)

- a) Moral
- b) Interactional
- c) Social
- d) Administrative
- e) Philosophical/ ideological.

Using these dimensions/ themes I shall begin to explore how the managers choose to characterise their work.

a) Moral.

The choice of this dimension is informed by the orientation of the managers, to themselves as something like moral agents, concerned with the distinctions between right & wrong.

For IC the sense of morality is part of his understanding of his work. He espouses a view which implies that a manager needs moral courage to face reality, line 323, which is "tough," rather than abandon the right course of action. He prescribes a moral guide for conducting the work, lines 280-288; "the position of employee X doesn't influence my position on the Organisation...then I think I have a duty to be compassionate & caring .. for Mr or Mrs X." IC orientates to a view of the manager as experiencing moral lessons that shape his way of operating. Thus he learns through experience that his duty is to the patient not to financial interests, lines 365-381. One even has a sense of him as constructor of the value system he operates within the Organisation, a constructor of some kind of morality within his Organisation. Having recognised the social accounts that exist in the NHS as excuses (line 310) and the management games people play (line 354) to secure resources, his work is to change the "moral line."

For AC one has the sense of his recognising a moral duty towards his Organisation, "before I can go up the career ladder I have to find my replacement", line 89. A sense of duty to his customers and staff; "This is a people business so people come first" line 284, "..in the middle of fixing a customer I'll even drop that if one of my managers comes & says look I really gotta problem."

For DB, as it is for IC morality is an issue that actually gives rise to his work. The account he constructs reveals him operating in a system where the morality of certain groups is questionable. People work for their own career interest (line 335, 357, 377) and not the Organisation's best interest (line 36.) DB's work entails managing within this. Coupled with this is a sense of a moral dilemma between providing customer service and making his own decisions, or adhering to official policy which requires him to wait for a central department to make a decision.

b) Interactional.

The idea that management is devoted to interactional activity is widely shared by both the managers and observers of them at work. "Management is in no way an isolated activity; it really is about achieving things, projects etc through working with people" DB.

IC's account orientates to his role as leader, suggesting that it is what for him management consists in, line 182, "I actually think its all about leadership style." He offers a prescription of good management, lines 134-137; "a high level of interpersonal skills" which includes such activities as "knowing people", "dealing with individuals development", "being able to judge people." His account, like that of AC & DB's is replete with references to activities that are of an interactional nature, from changing top management teams & team building, to managing relationships with customers.

For AC his work consists in directing the nature of his direct reports interactions; with customers, himself and with each other. The preference is for a unitary perspective, "working together as a team, that end goal is easy," line 418-9. For IC, AC & DB it is the interaction of the team that is integral to success; AC, line 453, "that's my managerial job.. quality service that's a true team effort."

For DB management is about a sensitivity to the various interactions within the Organisation. Part of his work consists of operating within a number of different interactional frames and this creates tensions. Line 37, "delicate business of trying to manage your customer requirements", line 82-83 "managing within the tensions that have arisen between the business centres & IM", line 83, interacting with those "on the mountain tops...who invariably you're not in touch. you're out of tune with," line 475. For IC & AC their version is one of responsibility for and of controlling interaction. For DB, however, the version suggests he is the recipient of interactional tensions within the Organisation, within which he must manage.

c) Social.

As well as orientating to the interactional nature of their work there is a sense of it as social activity, concerned with mutual relationships & interdependencies. The social framework of the accounts is the respective Organisation the managers work within and a network of relationships with customer, client, direct reports.

For IC a rationale for his version of managerial work is the "almost obsessive," line 366, concern that he has for patient care. His orientation is to espouse the means by which he can change the "social account" of the NHS offered by the managers.

For AC social relationships are of his own construction by having "changed the Organisation," line 288. The pattern of relationships is relatively unproblematic, a version of "working together", lines 457-62. These social relationships are not so smooth for DB & IC. For DB the perspective is of a plurality of interests. Management is about "balancing these differences:" differences between business centres & IM, between logistics and IM, between himself & his project managers.

d) Prescriptions relating to administration of the role.

For all the managers there is a sense of how to handle, control and organise the work. For IC & AC this is a much more certain & prescriptive set of instructions. IC, line 88-121 offers a prescription for management applicable to any business; "good quality service, communicate well and involve their staff.." Specifically he reveals a concern to attribute success in the role to leadership style, line 342, selection of players, lines 225, 409, 414 and adherence to procedures, line 455.

AC's administration of the role consists also in leadership style, in the reorganisation of the structure, and the setting up and monitoring of a team. He too can prescribe clear operating rules; "no one should have more than 6, 7 direct reports," line 587 "a memo should never be for setting direction," line 626-7, "all people ask is to be made accountable," line 269.

For DB administration of his role is less certain, though he does offer a prescription as to how a project should be managed, line 113-253. The underlying sense one has of his work is the paradox that in order to accomplish the official goals the manager must of necessity go outside the official line. Thus to achieve customer services DB must "go off on his own," line 148 away from the official line. Around line 110 we are presented with the official line for administration of his role; that he should use the IM department for IT expertise. However, line 115 offers a counter argument to support going off from this official direction; IT are too slow. The seeming ambivalence of DB's account mirrors the ambiguity in his work that his account portrays. Around line 515 DB's concern for just what "delivery" he is actually measured on, is ambivalent. Is it total delivery to the Organisation or is he measured just on delivery of projects? The accounts constitution preserves the equivocality for the reader. If such equivocality was removed the position would no longer be uncertain for DB and the accounting for tensions no longer such, becoming instead resolved. In DB's account the reader is left with a version which suggests the administration of the role is anything but the logical steps AC's account presents.

e) Philosophy of life.

It seems there is one overarching dimension which influences the versions & that is the managers' philosophy of life. It was my contention that it was how the managers fell on this dimension that significantly affected the characterisation & hence interpretation of their work. It was this dimension that accentuated the individuality of these managers' accounts.

For IC his knowledge of management is offered as stemming from a philosophy of life. Management is about facing the reality of life, something IC suggests many people ignore; "its almost realising if you don't face up to it there are consequences," line 190. "I can understand that point of view but I actually think it doesn't face the reality of life", line 230. Management is tough, its about doing things one doesn't like, and recognising that "there's a penalty for failure." IC's philosophy of life includes a philosophy of human nature, that even if people have offered a "social account" as an "excuse" for not doing things, appropriate management styles can bring about "amazing" changes in their performance.

AC's management philosophy is not unlike the conception of management as being a logical, rational series of activities, a sense that he is creator of his own destiny. "I believe that people must have logical minds; I do not believe that they can have illogical minds and be successful business people," line 572-4.

DB's philosophy of management appears more like IC's, in that he must face a reality existing outside of his control. He is a passive recipient not a constructor of his own destiny managing within inherent contradictions, equivocality and ambiguity of role. He, too, offers a philosophy of human nature, that it is primarily orientated to self interest.

A contribution to the management literature

The 1980's and early 1990's have seen much of the management literature in some way reliant on accounts offered by managers and consultants.¹⁴ Indeed, the managers themselves reveal a fascination for autobiographical and biographical texts. This suggests perhaps, that the managers themselves find the tales of experience valuable, able to import some wisdom with which to make sense of events. If this is so then research reliant on the managers own accounts of their work would appear to offer a potential dialogue between industry and social science.

There is however a danger in research methods which offer description and explanation by relying on their very subjects to generate 'self description' without attending to what the properties of such descriptive activities might be. A danger that they offer extracted, global summaries and impressionistic accounts.

Management theory has not appropriated occasions of explanation and accounting as important activities in the work of management, yet they could be devices through which the managers make sensible the endless variety and complexity that characterises their work. Sensible not just for others but for themselves.

The occasions of talk explored here reflect an interest in the individuals sense of their experience as individuals. A sense that for the managers what they do is influenced by their reflection upon past experiences, their preferred management style, their position in the Organisation, the nature of the people they manage. One is left with the sense that this albeit commonsense conception could be an occasion of coming to terms with the fact that they are "practically constrained"¹⁵ whether it be by fate, Organisational circumstances, or their own abilities. The study offers detailed empirical analysis which demonstrates the moral reasoning of the managers in account making, such as the kinds of rights and obligations tied up with managing customers, a business e.t.c.¹⁶

The interest of Part 2 differs from the body of literature which recycles common-sense understandings to the managers themselves, to borrow from Sharrock & Button (1991) it attempts

“to get common sense understandings into a rather different perspective.”
pg 167

being sensitive to the fact

“that theorists have crucially lost sight of the pervasive and persistent dependence of their own theorising upon such common-sense understandings.”

That is to say I retain a self conscious regard for my dependence on common-sense understandings by virtue of attendance to the occasion of “talk about management” as a practical activity itself; “doing accounts.”

Conclusion

The work of Chapters 6, 7 and 8 originated with the aim of revealing something of the features of managerial life and exploring how “talk about management” is done. This chapter would seem to suggest that such questions have, in part at least, been addressed.

The enquiry reveals the closely linked nature of the relationship between the view of their work the managers offer, the manner of the accounts' construction, the accomplishment of the interview and authorisation of the version.

At the beginning of Part 2 I raised the suggestion that such investigatory work might reveal the constellation of constructions the managers held to as making possible an adequate version of managerial work. This assumption that they shape up a culturally appropriate “reading” of their work has not emerged in the analysis. The verbal depiction's of their work do not reveal themselves as 'an unalloyed set', but instead emerge from the particular issues under consideration and do not fall into neat categories. Instead they appear as a number of 'lines of regard' which display a considerable diversity of expression, reflecting the particular orientations of each manager regarding the nature of his work. Analysis reveals that one can identify some of the rules of application underlying usage of a particular category, thus for example we learn what being a business comes to consist in for IC.

With respect to the question I raised in Chapter 5 concerning the existence of a formal array of descriptors, in particular those displayed in official documents within the Organisation we see little evidence of leverage from corporate top down messages. Indeed it seemed the managers at times were themselves offering something like official prescriptions. It remains a possibility that these men were actually constructing some formal stock of descriptors and preferences, some institutional definitions.

Exploration of the accounts has revealed a concern with “image-making”, some underlying interests from the managers for how they characterise their work. As a result I stress again that one must recognise that they are actively constructed accounts, devised in a particular way to meet the requirements of specific occasions and contexts, in this instance talking with a researcher.

The managers appear concerned to present a factually objective and authorised account, to avoid offering an account which might appear prejudiced. More traditional approaches to accounts might be concerned to explore the efficacy of particular versions, here the objective is not to find the truth out, to privilege one set of description over another, or even to imply it is a final definitive version, but to explore the managers various interpretative practices.

Through an exploration of the managers accounts we learn something of the range of 'considerations' and 'practical maxims' they orientate to and use in organising and interpreting a sense of their work. These in the main seem to derive from the managers examination of particular, both past and present, events in their lives, referenced as something like practical lessons. The accounts thus proceed on the basis of stories, understandings, espoused logic's and prescriptions.

Notes

¹ This question opens a large debate as to the role of the native in sociological theorising; a point I touch upon only briefly in Chapter 5. In so far as I think of the managers as theorists, it is as Sharrock and Button (in Button 1991 pg 143-155) say

“as practical theorists and that the conditions, occasions, procedures and topics of his/her theorising are socially sanctioned and socially furnished.”

² Referring to the managers accounts as “Versions” seemed to capture the way they exhibited a particular form, a particular way of telling about their work. We find there is more than one way of accounting for events and the notion of version recognises the particular account offered by the manager as one representation of the particular social events or facts under discussion. It recognises that one could see an alternative in what is being said, or find an alternative way to represent it. It implies the selection of materials with which to offer the telling.

³ The talk proceeds as a series of questions and responses, though I question whether it follows the conventional organisation one associates with interview, Heritage and Greatbatch (1991) Atkinson and Drew (1979). For example the opportunity for interactional dominance by the questioner is lessened by the managers tendency to offer assertions, proffer prescriptions, or corrections, work up extended turns and raise new issues for discussion. As a consequence one does not find the traditional “asymmetry” associated with occasions of interview. In the accounts my shaping of the talk is rather more by interruptions than I fail to make. I do not take up pauses, nor do I undertake corrections or explicit requests for clarification. Only where the manager makes very clear that he has concluded a particular part of his account do I speak. When I do pose questions they have more the quality of queries, preserving something of the topicality of previous talk. This provides the manager with a resource to monitor how he is understood and is frequently seen to result in the manager returning to the topic, frequently offering a position statement or underlining a point which closes the topic. It is left very much to the managers to decide what I want from this request for them “to talk to me about their work”

⁴ Garfinkel's (1967) investigations of Agnes explores the issue of “passing,” that is accomplishing in the normal course of events one's behaviour so that it will be viewed by ‘normals’ as routine and unquestioned methods of acting. For Agnes, because of her ambivalent gender identity, this passing as a “normal” exposed for Garfinkel the practical work of managing a sexual identity. But as Garfinkel himself notes the use of passing techniques is not limited solely to transsexuals. In conducting the research, I, as researcher faced many occasions in which I was endeavouring to “pass” with the managers as someone with adequate managerial knowledge.

⁵ This is not normally the case in occasions of interview eg Greatbatch (1986) finds in news interviews that the interviewers normally sanction interviewees when they violate their questions.

⁶ As Greatbatch (1986) says of news interviews,

“pre- and post-answer shifts represent the least sanctioned, and thus most acceptable of the procedures through which interviewees may attempt to breach the standard Q-A format of the interview.” pg 454

⁷ Atkinson (1983) proposes that recipients are more likely to respond to statements that emphasise their contents against a surrounding background of speech material, and which make apparent a point of

completion in the message. These, Atkinson suggests, are achieved by certain rhetorical devices, in particular by the use of contrasts and three part lists. Heritage and Greatbatch (1986) add to these; puzzle-solution, punch line, position statement. Such devices are identifiable within the talk.

⁸ Heritage & Greatbatch suggest that there is a tendency for speakers to offer the negative component of the contrast first.

⁹ Heritage & Greatbatch (1986),

“the speaker begins by establishing some kind of puzzle or problem in the minds of the listeners and then, shortly afterwards, offers as the solution to the puzzle a statement that stands as the core of the messages that he or she wishes to get across.”

¹⁰ Sacks (1974 & 1979) takes an interest in the analysability of children's stories for the insights they allow into categories they employ to make sense of every day life. Jefferson & Lee (1981) and Jefferson (1978) pursue an interest in stories as social activity, exploring their structural & sequential construction. Davis (1988) develops resources of CA to explore stories as interactional devices for locating & investigating power relations. Pondy (1983), Polanyi (1979) in the tradition of anthropology explore stories as representational of value and belief systems. Webb and Stimson (1976), Starbin (1986) argue that the story is a form of communication by which people make sense of their lives; past, present and future events. Rosaldo (1986) in Turner and Bruner "The Anthropology Experience", University of Illinois Press support this suggesting that the anthropologist may gain an understanding of which activities are of importance to people by listening to the stories told.

¹¹ This follows Jefferson (1979) emphasis on the importance of recipients monitoring the stories presentation for signs that it is completed and offering the appropriate responses.

¹² How this particular version can be constructed so as to be treated by the recipient as what happens, and the interpretation of that happening as the correct one.

¹³ Following Jones (1983) this refers to the managers customary ways of making sense of particular features of their work. The notion of convention suggesting something weaker than rules, something more like a 'line of regard'.

¹⁴ Guest (1992) explores the possible reason for the popularity of such texts as Peters and Waterman "In search of Excellence" (1982), Blanchard and Johnson (1992) "One minute manager" and Harvey-Jones (1987) "John Harvey-Jones". Guest identifies a number of reasons that one might use to explain the popularity of these texts; their message is valid, they are perceived by the managers as valid and practical, and are easy to read, well marketed and well timed.

¹⁵ Sharrock & Button (1991) pg 167

¹⁶ As Jayyuski (1991) succinctly puts it

“Sack's notion of category bound actions, rights and obligations not only points out the moral features of our category concepts, but also provides thus for the moral accounting of certain actions or omissions” pg 240.

That is to say attention to the categories that the managers construct uncovers features of the organisation of the managers conventional knowledge of their world. The inferences, judgements, associations the managers make. It makes available their values, relevance's and concerns.

***"What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end
is to make a beginning".***

Little Gidding, T.S.Eliot

Chapter 10- Conclusion

The thesis aim has been to advance our understanding of managerial work. It makes a contribution to an understanding of management by exploring the detailed accomplishment of managerial work, a response to the paucity of understanding and literature in this area. In addition it contributes to an understanding of just how the managers themselves shape up an understanding of their world.

I take the opportunity here to reflect on these contributions as well as to reflect upon the methodological approach and its value for future research.

The research has developed and taken on a shape of its own in response to the discovery that occasions of management talk provided materials for exploring the accomplishment of management activities. In its explication I have attended to three arenas of management activity (i) memo sending (ii) management meetings and (iii) 'tours' of the work.

The research is informed by the ethnomethodological studies of work in terms of its interest in eliciting the natural organisation which comprises management work (Part 1) and for what one can show through an approach sensitive to members' own understandings of their activities (Part 2). It is to point both to the need to look at managerial work as real world social activities and to consider how the methodological approach one takes to such study shapes the research outcome. This is to recognise the central value of an empirically grounded enquiry and an interest in social interaction.

In pursuing this interest I have attempted to take seriously Lynch's (1988) stricture concerning the "material demonstration" of the practices studied. In this study the inclusion of transcript & document allow the reader to judge the adequacy of the claims that I make for the data. The records of the work that I have explored are not just attended to as "descriptive practices" of management work, as might be more normal amongst management studies, but rather for how we might try to understand and analyse them for how they are themselves practical accomplishments of managerial work. Following Douglas (1971) the records become the topic for research rather than a resource.

Such a methodological precept makes visible something of the 'contemporaneous achievement' of management as a practical activity, that is not visible within conventional studies of managerial work. Further, it finds topics not yet recognised by them as possible topics of interest, in particular the managers interactional competencies.

This study, at the level of social interaction, has been interested in the 'just whatness' of the work, the methods by which the managers organise their activities so as to set up a desired response, to reach agreement, to accomplish future plans etc. That is examining the way the work is done in terms of the actions that make it happen. This is to suggest that whatever sense we or the managers might find in the activities in which they engage has been produced in the occasions themselves. The study has thus attempted to operationalise a methodological approach that enables one to learn what situated practices of management are composed of in the detail of their accomplishment as practical social activities.

The interest in the research has been in particular instances of management work. It could be that some, particularly those working within the paradigm I crudely label positivist, would question such an interest suggesting that generalisation across a range of activities of management work would be of greater benefit. But I agree with the views expressed by Jones (1983), that such objections are misdirected concerns. Firstly they are premature given how very little we know of what managers are doing in particular occasions of work. It is to take as the starting point for research an interest in the particular. Secondly, they reveal a misunderstanding, for a concern with management work in the particular does not compete with or countermand any interest in the generalisable. It is to misconceive my research interest for I am not interested in the construction of general categories from across events rather in how one might succeed in bringing out the fine level of organisation that one finds within occasions of management activities.

The study takes an aspect of management work, text & talk, which appears to have been neglected at the empirical level as a means to explore the work of managers. The research began using the resources of conversation analysis (CA) which have been found to have contributed to an understanding of the nature of managerial practice as insitu, practical accomplishments by the provision of a means to discover the sequential processes and structures of their talk and action. Indeed they are found to offer analytic purchase on a number of features of the work, rendered available in both oral and textual form. [In Chapter 2 such features as 'requesting' and 'defending', in Chapters 3 & 4 such features include 'managing disagreement', 'achieving agreement', 'explaining' etc.]

However, following the tradition of a number of "Studies of Work" such as Anderson, Hughes & Sharrock (1989), and Moerman (1988) in the field of ethnography, the study has not been constrained by the methods of CA. It seemed to me that application of CA's

resources to extracts of talk could place the analyst in the position of interpreting utterances from the perspective of "anybody" overhearing the conversation rather than from the position of those persons in the conversation. Further its central concern with sequential organisations was in danger of omitting to attend to a retrospective-prospective order discoverable across occasions of talk.

Here attention to ethnographic detail and repeated attention to the tapes means a hearing of 'what is going on' develops which is more sensitive to the particular sense of the talk and counteracts the fact that CA might be argued to

"be more concerned with utterances than with speakers and hearers"
pg 68 Sharrock & Anderson (1986) .

The ethnographic detail however, remains largely accountable to the instance by instance detail of occasions under study. Indeed I was cautious of importing too easily "anthropological" resources that I acquired by my observation of the managers at work, for it would be to frame the world in terms of my own set of relevancies. Thus where I do include ethnographic detail it is to afford some 'practical sensibility' to the reader. As Lynch (1985 pg 276) says this 'practical sensibility' is itself reflexive to a competence in management. That the sensibility of the occasions of management was not always adequately extractable from the particular occasions being studied is not something that I have extensively commented upon, here in the conclusion it is perhaps important.

After a period of time watching the managers in their daily interactions, and from the instruction they sometimes offered as to how to make sense of their world, one is able to afford some sense to the events observed. The language becomes familiar, one senses how particular managers will approach situations; how they want events to turn out. This "interpretive competency" remained however limited on my part. However, it is not for that reason that I seek to keep observational/ descriptive comment to a minimum, it is rather from a belief that the occasions themselves afford a visibility to what it is that they are about.

I started the work of analysis exploring the Organisational use of the memo. There appears a general lack of attention on the part of management research for the work done within memos yet it was a feature of the work that the managers themselves directed me to. This work is represented in Chapter 2, where the instance is a pair of memos. This study was originally meant as a preliminary piece of work, however, analysis revealed something more fundamental as to how managerial work is organised. It points to the fine grained nature of the phenomena and to the memos, not as static documents but as displaying characteristics normally associated with occasions of talk.

This suggests that moving outside of the conventional application of the methods of CA has something to contribute. That is to say there were some things recognisable as

conversational actions abstractable as materials employed in the accomplishment of the work in the memo. CA is found to offer an adequate set of resources to deal with written materials. However, at the stage of writing the memo chapter I developed some misgivings as to the adequacy of the early work of CA, which was preoccupied with a sequential design. It failed to capture an organisation which was more than sequential. The chapter thus takes CA onwards and finds a retrospective-prospective order. Such that the work of the memo; "setting up a problem", "negotiating a position", "setting up a request, "reproaching" amongst other things is found to be built up by relationships across the line by line.

Throughout the PhD I work with resources from CA to study details of interaction and the fundamental initiatives and principles provided by Garfinkel whilst seeking to develop from them. Inclusion of ethnographic detail at the outset of each chapter is one such divergence from normal practice within these fields, though I do not afford it explicit analytical attention. It is given to allow the reader access to what both the manager and I, through prior discussion with him, experience of the situation. It recognises that in exploring the data I cannot set aside my 'ordinary competence' as a person party to some wider sense of the memos work, neither I would suggest do the managers. Although the managers prior understanding of the situation still has to be, in part at least, brought off as a practical accomplishment in the occasion itself.

Field experiences gave me access to the various situations of the managers' work, in particular to occasions of meetings & the conversations that had a demonstrable relevance to the collaborative work being performed. Thus I move in Chapters 3 & 4 from the written material of the memo to an interest in management talk, made available in transcript form. The transcripts represent two occasions of meetings taken from two different Organisations ; one concerned with the future working relationship of the two managers, the other to discuss the strategic implementation of a change in Organisational structure.

In exploring the transcript from the particular meeting which forms Chapter 3 my initial interest was with just what the work consisted in. The manager, DB, resolved a concern I had with what aspect of management was being represented classifying the activity as 'Planning' and 'Organising'. However, analysis reveals that management is not as easily put into compartments as existing theories, such as Fayol (1949), or the managers themselves would suggest. The process of identifying activities is much more fraught than we are led to believe.

Indeed attempts analytically to isolate planning from the natural arena of its occurrence finds one misses much of the other activities of management and business relevancies that are entwined with it: such activities as 'problem solving', 'decision making',

'disagreement management', 'scheduling', all are inextricably entwined. To abstract these activities from the context in which they are produced is to lose the essence of the occasions character.

The work of Chapters 3 & 4 reveals that the managers characterisation of activities as 'planning' and 'organising' and the demonstration of them as socially organised events differ. Indeed for the managers planning and organising can be used to refer to events where in fact little planning and organising gets done. In Chapter 3 the manager, DB, suggests that for him the occasion of planning is about an agreed future state, the result of a prior design, in this instance the written agenda for the meeting. Analysis however finds that 'planning' as an activity is an accomplishment within the occasion of meeting and achieved through amongst other things activities of reaching agreement as to where they are presently at. In Chapter 3 this is finding a name for the proposed future state; in Chapter 4 this is establishing the need for terms of reference and the Strategic Planning Groups support. It is working an organisation out around particular happenings; in Chapter 3 the LBA meeting, in Chapter 4 the attitudes of key individuals to the change, the position of competitors and the "SPG's meeting."

Chapter 4 finds that issues often referred to as 'macro issues' by the literature and not normally taken to be amenable to exploration at the interactional level are visible. So in Chapter 4 we find strategic planning, Organisational change, implementation of Organisational structure are discoverable at the interactional level. I had not expected to get a grip on such 'grand designs' yet within the analysis one recovers something of their accomplishment, though it remains just one point of entry to a 'process' building over many such occasions of interaction.

In Chapter 4 analysis of the meeting to discuss the implementation of change in Organisational structure not only reveals the practices by which a strategic planning session gets done but reveals the conception of the work the managers hold as constituting "matrix structure." This we learn consists, amongst other things, of a consideration of the communication system, competitive pressures, reporting relationships.

A recurring feature of these occasions is their formulation to deal with local & strategic issues. Thus we find the plan to change structure shows every sign of being developed to deal with concerns of particular personalities, concerns that direct reports will not be able to fulfil demands to deal with differences of opinion on the role of meetings, competitors' position. We find that the situated detail of the local issues are integral to the accomplishment of the particular activity under study, in this instance implementing a strategic plan. A comprehensive understanding of the work required a comprehension of the specific issues under the managers' enquiry.

Examination of the managers' talk reveals that local issues, local knowledge & characteristics of the work were not just problematic for me as analyst but at times problematic and of concern to the managers themselves. Just what was going on was not always accessible to the managers themselves. It points to what Lynch (1985) refers to as, "how the sensibilities of the talk" for the managers was local to its productive situation. So when, as is often the case, we see two managers meet from different backgrounds in the Organisation time is spent clarifying in lay terms just what they were doing. That is to say "doing explanation", a point to which I will return, is found to be important to the managers locating where they are moving off from in the talk in occasions of 'organising', 'decision making', 'negotiating' etc.

Paradoxically there was an ambivalence in that the managers are found to be concerned with discovering what they were about, yet simultaneously there is a sense that they had something like a projected sense of what they were doing, 'a line to regard', 'background understandings' orientated to and relied upon by them in constructing and making accountable their practical activities. Planning as an activity was not just about finding a way forward, but it was also about making sense of events retrospectively. Such work one finds is done by devices of explanation and description. In Chapter 4 CE works up an account of how things have operated in the past. This account is found to serve a number of interactional uses; a) it offered a justification for the change, b) it dismissed the view that change would be resisted c) it forecloses concerns with the efficacy of the change and allows the managers (HT & CE) to move on in their work. Thus account making is found to be important in the routine accomplishment of particular occasions of work.

For a number of reasons, explored in Chapter 5, this was interesting, indeed it led to the work of Part 2. It is perhaps opportune before exploring the findings of Part 2 to recall just what drove the development of Part 2. At one level Part 2 reflects my response to an analytical tension that I faced. Management was explorable both as the members own espoused views, and also as it existed as the practical accomplishments of work which was largely unexplored by the managers themselves.

My initial decision to extend my interest from 'talk as the work' to 'talk about the work' was motivated by my reflections that in looking at the phenomena of management from a perspective interested in the practical accomplishment of the objects of study was to pay insufficient regard to

"the special and circumstantial work involved in analysing "conversation"
by the participants in the settings," Lynch (1985 pg 21)

Part 1 it seemed was speaking in a detached way which did not fully attend to the motives, 'practical logic's' and 'schemes of relevance's' that the managers appear to work with. I sought alternative access to the managers work of making sense, in a manner not at odds with the "Studies of work".

Such work has sought to recover the interpretative work demanded of the manager, to close the gap between activity and accounts of their work. What a manager is doing and what he will conceive himself to be doing will of necessity be different. Thus Part 1 and Part 2 might offer different but equally important contributions to an understanding of management.

In Chapter 5 I mention Lynch's (1985) study of laboratory shop talk as influential to the development of Part 2. Lynch identifies two distinct modes of discourse in the work of science "talking science" and "talk about science" the latter exemplified in the discussions within laboratory tours and research reports. His work triggered my interest in whether two distinct modes of discourse were apparent in the managers work. The analysis of Part 1 seemed to point to occasions where the managers are concerned to explain and espouse features of their work.

So considering the involvement of discourse in the accomplishment of management work in terms of what, borrowing from Lynch, I call "management talk" and "talk about management" one finds that although they are not distinct in the occasions in which they appear, they are distinct in terms of their analytic visibility. "Talking management" is the competence which is required to talk sensibly in a local management setting, the interest of Part 1. In terms of "talking science" Lynch refers to this as talk which is strange to a non-practitioners comprehension. It includes, too, the idea that talk is the work; things get done by talk such as where work is achieved in the managers' occupational use of 'requests', 'questions', 'agreement' / 'disagreement' and 'statements' etc. That it resembles practices of ordinary conversation is not surprising given that the activity must be managed through practices of ordinary conversation.

"Talk about science" for Lynch exhibits the work in a descriptive and recipient designed manner, typically the work of 'tours' for visitors and research reports. In Part 2 the concern is with occasions of "tours" offered to me by the managers and not with occasions of "talking about management" in the more naturally occurring sites of work such as in Part 1. Before I attend to the adequacies/ inadequacies of this choice, I wish to reflect on why I took that path. Preliminary examinations of the managers talk with me about their work led to me to consider that I had to hand some commonsense logic of management, what I came to refer to as something like 'members theories', 'espoused logic's' and 'rules of thumb' which were glimpsed in the daily routines explored in Part 1. Part 2 extends the noticing in Part 1 that the managers had a sense of what their work was about. What I am suggesting is that Part 2 has afforded a visibility to how the managers render their work mundane and familiar. This competence may be important. It could be from such 'rules of thumb', 'practical logic' that the work proceeds. On the basis of experience the managers may take a position in decision making, find a way to proceed despite seeming ambiguity or preempt how plans will work out etc.

At the conclusion of this study it is worth reflecting on whether the distinction; "talking management" and "talk about management" has been a useful one. Lynch's work offered a starting point, but pursuing his interests seemed not to attend to what for me appeared to be an accountable part of doing management work, that was "talk about management" as part of the work itself, albeit not always appropriated as talk for a non-practitioner.

What I am more sure of is that whilst I recognise that the distinction of "talking management" and "talk about management" might be useful in exploring laboratory work, in terms of management work the distinction proves less useful. Exploring these two modes of discourse in terms of management finds it is difficult to be clear where "talking management" and "talk about management" begin and end. Indeed now I have come to the end of the study I doubt whether such a definitive characterisation is useful. Descriptions of management in a general way are analytically visible as part of "talking management." In their daily routines the managers clearly had occasion to talk about what they did.

Why then do I retain the sense of "talking management" and "talk about management"? "Talk about management" identifies occasions of talk which exhibit the work in a descriptive and educative manner, the kind of talk offered in the 'tours' of the work the managers had given me at the outset of the research but also I suggest in many other occasions of the work. One might suggest that the ability to talk about what one does is more important in managerial work than in the work of scientists where the work has more of a bodily visibility. It could be that scientists utilise non-vocal materials and formulations; notes, electron micrographs etc in doing science whereas in doing management verbal discourse is more essentially part of the works accomplishment.

Observation reveals that the ability to talk sensibly about what they do is integral to the accomplishment of particular activities demanded in the managers daily work. That is to say some management activities rely almost exclusively on the managers ability to offer such tours; to customers, suppliers, other managers, staff, and visitors. Such occasions are interesting too for a sense one has that the managers hold, albeit in an occasioned and vague manner, something like a line of regard to their work, some projected sense of what their work consists in. Lynch (1985) by virtue of a different set of interests chooses not to attend to the 'tours' of the laboratory that he observes.

At the conclusion of the study it is worth dwelling on the contribution of Part 2 given the "productive uncertainties" of using accounts as a means to develop an understanding of managerial work. The data of Part 2 represents transcribed audio recordings of "verbal tours" of the work given to me by the managers in the early part of the research. Exploration of three such occasions form the work of Chapters 6, 7 & 8.

Chapter 9 seeks to assess the contribution of the approach taken in Chapter 6, 7 and 8. It finds the contribution to lie in two main areas;

a) Firstly an ethnomethodological orientation allows access to the 'tours' as accomplishments in their own right making visible something of how the managers construct a "version" of their lives. It is to be interested in the accomplishment of "doing explanation." The managers' in "doing explanation" orientate to their own actions as objects of investigation. In making what he does accountable to me it is observable that the manager is not an expert in his culture; his reasoning is not unproblematic. I posit the idea that the managers, and I as researcher, had to discover together what was going on, thus as Sharrock & Anderson (1983) suggest

"one can treat meaning as an achievable phenomenon, and understanding as a delicate interactional business." pg 133

The study finds that the managers make use of a number of general practices to construct and authorise their accounts such as formulations, story and third party accounts. It finds that the managers appear sensitive to possible "alternative versions" that I as recipient might hold, this strengthens my suggestion that they orientate to and seek to authorise their own, preferred understanding of their work.

An understanding of just what doing accounts of management involved, such as Part 2 provides was valuable given that management theories (eg Kotter, Mintzberg, Stewart) are frequently founded on what managers tell us. Given the heavy reliance of social science research on talking to people the study suggests the need for attention to be given to the interactional and conversational basis of interviews. The work of Part 2 moves towards this, finding that a reflective approach sensitive to the interview as a collaborative, situated occasion of interaction allows more access to the talk and conduct occurring there. Exploration of the 'contemporaneous achievement' of the interview allows access to the researcher as co-participant. The public availability of transcripts from tape recordings of the occasions affords access to the practices that allow particular inferences to be heard.

In analysis of the interview data a sensitivity to the collaborative nature and situatedness of the activity has attempted to provide an approach adequate at the level of social action and to analytically rescue accounts and indeed interview data as valuable to the social science enterprise.

b) The second interest in accounts is in what they can reveal of the lineaments of the managers commonsense understanding of their work. The discovery of the operation of preference, the concern with the adequacy & the authorisation of these versions contributes to a sense that these are something like 'espoused logic's'; the individual managers solution to the puzzle "What is management work about?" These occasions of "talk about management" are taken seriously, not just any old telling will do. One has a sense they are offering an official line as to what someone in their place should know, learn and be made aware of. It reveals the devices by which the managers depict their work, the significance of stories of past experience and metaphor as resources to make the telling easy.

Examination of their "talk about management" reveals an amalgam of conceptions of managerial work. It finds, however, a number of key themes orientated to by the managers;

- the desired mode of conduct and involvement
- eg a concern for the employees, customers, provision of service
- the basis of team & leadership responsibilities
- the significance of changes in Organisational structure
- philosophies of life
- What being 'effective' in their work consists in

Although managers differ in their orientation to these conceptions and the understanding they hold of them, there was some indication of subscription to a number of shared and distinctive aspects of their work.

Garfinkel (1967) recognises the existence of these background assumptions but I suggest has not worked them up in any detail. Thus he talks of jurors following common sense models, as culturally presupposed standards with logical properties.

So for example Garfinkel (1967) offers us an account of jurors' decision-making which suggests that they consult the consistency of alternative claims made by reference to their commonsense models.

"If the interpretation made good sense then that is what happened," pg 106

so it could be for the managers, that if what happened in their day to day world corresponds with their 'commonsense models' then some 'accepted points of fact' and accepted schemes emerge for co-relating these features of management. Garfinkel suggests that the jurors he studied treated this 'corpus'

"as a set of statements that can correctly be used as the basis for further inference and action." pg 107

Garfinkel does not explore the properties of these 'commonsense models'. They are, he says, retained in 'unrecorded fashions', but is that to say they are not visible? It is argued,

and empirical evidence evinced which suggests that something of this 'set' can be revealed by the employment of an appropriate mode of analysis, attentive to the individual managers understanding of his work.

Those concerned with Garfinkel and Sacks proposition that for any set of events in the world there is an infinite number of categories that may be used to describe them are recognising a problem of daily life, indeed a problem for the managers themselves. Thus managers must work so as to link particular categories to a particular set of circumstances eg authorising the relevance of a particular descriptor and thus excluding others from consideration. This is itself revealing of the 'lineaments of commonsense' that underly the managers' preference for one category over another.

In both Part 1 and Part 2 the managers were concerned to give sense to what they were doing as a practical feature of their work, to employ the practices of "naming" and "characterisation". Thus in Chapter 3 DB and DW pay considerable attention to just what the expected plan will be called.

This finding is of a different order than an interest in the managers 'commonsense understandings', it is to suggest that the ability to "do accounting", "do theorising" is an important competence in itself. In other words I am suggesting that the managers' theories and philosophies revealed in the accounts were something they relied on in other instances of their daily work to make visible their understandings, construct plausible explanation and arguments. A number of studies supported this finding suggesting that constructions of sound argument and explanation figure prominently in the work of a number of occupations; Gilbert and Mulkay (1980) scientists talk, Atkinson(1983), Heritage & Greatbatch (1986) political orators.

The above discussion is in danger of smoothing over a number of tensions I faced in pursuing my interest in the potential contribution of accounts to an understanding of management, particularly my use of the managers accounts to me as researcher. It is to these tensions, which remain in part unresolved, that I now wish to turn. Firstly some might object that since managers' accounts are indexical and reflexive, the status of my interest is questionable. Where I might agree is that accounts offered to a researcher remain "accounts to a researcher" and what would be interesting to explore were occasions of extended talk about management in more recognisably managerial occasions of work, for example as part of a selection interview or induction where managers are sensitive to audience and have occasion to reflect upon what they do in a 'studied way'.

However, as regards to the situatedness of the managers talk it seems to me that as long as I do not claim to be offering (both in content and coverage) an exhaustive set of the descriptive categories the managers could be found to employ there was a value in this

kind of expository work. Its value lies in developing an analytical approach which can access the descriptive categorisations, background understandings which the managers choose to orientate to and in making visible something like the glimpse one might have of a language by perusing a dictionary.

It might be suggested that the test of the accounts is to examine the relationship they hold in respect of the work of Part 1. There were some clear similarities, in the constructions they placed upon their world. Consider for example the recipient directed explanation that CE offers in Chapter 4 to explicate his own experience to his colleague, HT as a guide to just what the work of the implementation was to involve. Just as The telling of stories from experience had authorised features of the managers' recountings to me, so they served to make sensible features of their work for the managers in their daily tasks ensuring that the recipient is working with similar knowledge & definitions of the situation. It points to the significance of understanding and rationality in managerial life as an activity, accomplished in and through talk.

Finally some might suggest that Parts 1 & 2 should be combined, given that research finds that they are in fact "hinged". First by virtue of the fact that a constituent feature of "talking management" was found to be "talk about management" and second that both instances of talk allowed an exploration of managers characterisations of their work as orientated to and conveyed by them thus making a valid contribution in its own right to our understanding of how managers shape up their lives.

However, it seems to me that the unification of Parts 1 and 2 into one explanatory framework is not an exercise that is productive given the paucity of empirical work in the management field. Indeed such an enterprise would have been an artefact of writing up the research. They remain compatible, sharing a similar interest in the rationality's of everyday social life.

The PhD reflects work still at the exploratory stage. It points up the progressive nature of the research activity and raises for me two fundamental questions. To what extent can one utilise the wealth of data displayed without losing the methodological integrity of a sound conceptual and analytical approach? Further is there not some irony that when looking at something we know little about, the end of the research process is to offer it as findings where the very derivation of the contributions is lost? It is this derivation that is interesting. To abstract the questions one asks oneself on the way and the dilemmas faced is to miss the process of discovery, of understanding.

Whether or not such situated work is ultimately adequate as a basis for the developing of an understanding of management work cannot be settled in advance without denying the enquiry of its very essence. It is the uncertainty that characterises the advent of new

understanding and derivation of theory. In doing the research I developed an enacting concern that what is often forgotten is that the derivation of theory must in fact come about by virtue of the nature of the methods employed. The chapters share in common a concern to develop description of the machinery of “practical reasoning” which have both analytical generality and are formulated in rigorous terms. At the conceptual level it is to ensure a place for methodological plurality which does not shy from or try to cover over differences, being sensitive to whether areas of inquiry present themselves in opposition and detailing what may be points of difference between them to the reader. This ensures that the research remains at an appropriate conceptual level. It is to develop a place for description as a written feature of research accounts and for keeping open the problematic of the research process. Further it stays within its methodological frames, it does not seek to harmonise ethnomethodology with CA but to move across their frontiers by analysis which is open and principled. Principled in amongst other things, faithfulness to the phenomena, sensitivity to problems of operationalisation and in making public the reasoning underlying the research's development.

This thesis originated with the aim of advancing our understanding of management work by investigating the locally organised details of managerial work. It has sought to re-examine the provision of methods for apprehending the phenomena of management; to locate managerial work as the accomplishment of the managers themselves; to advance an argument for research which offers insights into how the managers themselves resolve the gap between the private reality and the public image of management. Having taken up this challenge I am left with the belief that what I have begun to discover is something of the way managerial work is recoverable within the detail of social interaction, and something of the way that managers make what it is they do recognisable and accountable.

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APPENDICES

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Transcription symbols

The conversational materials are transcribed from audio recordings along the lines of the notation method developed by G.Jefferson. This appendix borrows heavily from that offered in Boden,D and Zimmerman, D (1991).

Simultaneity & silence

Speakers beginning to talk at the same moment are indicated by double left hand brackets

DB [[yeah

DW for budget

Utterances overlapping

These are shown by a break in the sentence at the point of overlap and the simultaneity symbol

DW ... that you particularly want?

DB [[well

DW just have a look

Continuous talk

Utterances which follow each other without perceptible pauses, silence or overlap. The "latching" is represented by equal signs

DW just have a look

DB = okay

Gaps, pauses and silences in the course of talk

Intervals in talk are timed in tenths of a second & indicated in a parenthesis either within turns

DB for budget ten percent (1.0) reductions

or between turns

DW Ok:ay

(3.0)

DB eh::hh

Characteristics in speech delivery

Conventional punctuation symbols are used throughout the transcripts to indicate pacing & inflection of speech delivery.

Colons indicate stretched sounds in the delivery of the talk

DW eh::hh

Other standard punctuation markers include

? A question mark indicates a rising intonation on a word or utterance, but not necessarily a question.

Laughter & other audible breathing sounds are inserted as descriptive comments

eg (in breath) , (chuckle)

Transcribers notation

Transcription doubts & difficulties; poor recording quality, competing sounds or other features which disturb the intelligibility are transcribed as

either; empty brackets, () where the length of the bracket roughly indicates the length of the inaudible piece, or as (inaudible)

Memo 1.

1 ***** Bxxx PLC.
2 LL-IN-1 Network Services

3 Date Sent: 2-Aug-1988 12:41 BST
4 From: Mr M J Hxxxxx, CHAD., Poole
Bxxxxx,MJ1
5 Dept: Chief Accountants
6 Tel No: 0202 671212 ext 2810

7 O: Jean Bxxxxxxx : CHAD. Poole (Bxxxxxxx,J1)
8 C: Jerry R Txxxxx, CHAD. Poole (Txxxxx JR1)
9 C: Mr Jack Gxxxxx, CHAD. Poole (Gxxxxx,JDI)
10 C: Rxxxx.V.P.R. CHAD. POOLE (Rxxxx,RVP: AT A1 AT ZPLE16)

11 Subject: CHACS

12 The MSD team say that there are shortcomings in the
13 specifications which involve extra work. They wish to add the cost
14 of this to the fixed fee that was agreed at the outset. So far one
15 or two minor increases have been agreed because we had no choice,
16 but I think we've now reached the stage where some formal decision
17 needs to be taken. The matter is made worse by the current
18 position of the budget for the project, which, since Les is no
19 longer here, JRT and I have been looking at.

20 As I understand it (and subject to anything JDG has to add) the
21 position is :-

22 1. Original Position.
23 As far as I can see, NJB signed an authorisation (MSD form,
24 BBC20) for a fixed fee of £172,800 in 1987. Subsequently, Les
25 got NJB's agreement to pay an extra £14,000 (I think) for an
26 extra consultant. So the total cost that has been authorised
27 is probably £186,800. Nothing was added as a contingency.

28 2. Current Position.
29 So far no payments have been made to MSD. This year's budget
30 includes only £172,800 - arrived at by taking the MSD fee of
31 £172,800 and deducting £50,000, which was wrongly assumed to
32 have been paid in 1987. The £14,000 extra fee seems not to
33 appear anywhere.

34 3. Likely Final Position.
35 MSD will probably charge us £186,800 - to put us £64,000 over
36 budget for this year. In addition it has been necessary to agree
37 to MSD providing an extra 7 days (say £2,000). So the total
38 over-run looks like £66,000 so far.

39 It now seems likely that there will be further demands for extra
40 payments to MSD and John Axxxxxx estimates that, from their
41 experience so far, this could amount to a further 19 man days
42 (say £6,000). This is by no means a firm figure; it could be

Memo 1.

43 less but, I guess, is likely to be more. It does not, in
 44 anycase, cover anything other than minor amendments.

45 The likely position looks at the moment like :-

46	Budget error	£64,000
47	Specification shortcomings - agreed	£ 2,000
48		£66,000
49	" " - estimated	£ 6,000
50		<u>£72,000</u>

51 Presumably there is nothing that can be done about the 1988 budget
 52 error and I imagine that we have little choice but to sign on for
 53 the extra work as it is identified by the MSD team. I do not think
 54 it worthwhile asking x x x to pay and the alternative is to
 55 abort the whole thing. The relatively small increases in cost
 56 hardly justify that.

57 Do you want to talk to JRT and me about it next week (when he is
 58 back from holiday), or are you happy for us to allow an additional
 59 £6,000 for extra work by MSD without further reference to you?

Memo 2.

0 Bxxxxxxx Bxxx PLC.
1 ALL-IN-1 Network Services

2 Date Sent: 2-Aug-1988 14:47 BST
3 From: Jxxx Bxxxxxxx : CHAD, Poole
4 Bxxxxxxx,J1
5 Dept: Chief Accountants Dept
6 Tel No: 0202 671212 Ex 2830

7 TO: Mr M J Hxxxx, CHAD., Poole (Hxxxx,MJ1)
8 CC: Roger.V.P.Kxxxx, CHAD, POOLE (Kxxxx,RVP1 AT A1 AT 2PLE16)
9 CC: Mr John Gxxxx, CHAD, Poole (Gxxxx,JD1)
10 CC: John R Txxxx, CHAD, Poole (Txxxx,JR1)
11 CC: Anne Pxxxx: CHAD, Poole (Bxxxxxxx,J1_SEC)

12 Subject: RE: CHACS

13 Thanks. I think there are several points:

14 1- With hindsight, we should have set up a contingency, as
15 one always does on such a project. We were deceiving
16 ourselves if we thought it was unnecessary. But that is water
17 under the bridge.

18 2- the wrong assumption re the b50000 is extremely
19 unfortunate. However, we can hardly abort because of it. I
20 see no practical alternative but to continue, and to report
21 the resultant 1988 adverse variance to BGP in due course.

22 3 - the b2000 was almost predictable (it would have been
23 covered by the contingency, if we had one) and is no real
24 problem.

25 4 - I agree that the b6000 is likely to grow somewhat - these
26 costs always do. Again, it should have been covered by
27 contingency.

28 Please:

29 - confirm to CMSE that we agree up to b6000

30 - express our concern about the increases (not that it will
31 do much good)

32 - refer to me if CMSE want significantly more than b6000

33 - let us talk, with JRT when he is back, next week when you
34 are both ready. Can you arrange please? We should try to
35 establish what further extras we may face; and the scope for
36 passing the extras to x x x.

1 DB: Okay. we can do that. and I'll report back to you about uhmmm
2 progress on that. (7.0) (during which time he shuffles papers on the desk)
3 DB: too . to go back to ye: your agenda (3.0) (looks at a page on the desk)
4 DW: yes (4.0) (during which time he noisily turns several pages)
5 DW: So . wh we:re saying your priorities really are are the. thee business
6 cases for Dec Dec etc and the business case?
7 DB: [[yeah
8 DW: for budget ten percent (1.0) reductions?
9 DB: [[yeah
10 DW: Between now and the LBA ? (0.5)
11 DW: Which is a, h week on wednesday? (0.5)
12 DB: =yeah
13 DW: =ok:ay (3.0)
14 DB: eh::hh
15 DW: = I think we've probably, done enough on EIP as we've been talking
16 DB: [[yeah
17 DW: =through that
18 DW: haven't we. is there anything I ana LBM agenda that you particularly
19 want
20 DB: [[well
21 DW: just have a look
22 DB: =okay
23 DW: =let me know
24 DW: =mm mh ? (0.5)
25 DB: No we::ve got some w' got some. reasonable good results coming up
26 here and I hope we're goin to give you bits of good news. mm mm abou
27 inna the CREW area mm
28 DW: [[mm
29 DB: but I but I haveen' I haven' got we're focusing we're focusing on two
30 things. One is the reporting, up to today ((in breath)) we're focusing
31 on the report we've we got to give you aabout our reporting
32 DW: [[ehmmm
33 DB: and. try and give you something to bite on ((inbreath)) and the second
34 thing was to uhmm weeev'e know mapped out. a foc a focus to the
35 business centre for the next year, on, and uhm wh what we we'll be
36 spending our time on. and also praps a plan of where we wanna to do
37 these things, and I was gonna
38 DW: = what would you call that ?
39 DB: [[well what I was gonna do, I was gonna show you a quick two
40 page document n say is this the kinn=a thing, that you want at LBM
41 DW: =mm

42 DB: mm (0.5) and if you do

43 DW: [[can you leave it with me ?

44 DB: = yeah ok:kahh In havn', I haven't I I I will have it next week (1.0)

45 DW: eh. alright . what would you call it though? (0.5) Uhh its your (0.5)

46 eh

47 DB: [[i it

48 DW: eh::m, it's your work plan almost

49 DB: [[yeah (0.5) ehmmm its it it a really our strategy eh::m

50 DW: [[ok::ay w'll our strategy, is it twelve months ? mm alright

51 DB: =well its (0.5) if we started off looking at twelve, we'd better look

52 at 15 months we've got we've we've got work for the next. we've got

53 focus for the next for the next six.

54 DW: =yeah (2.0) don't know what to call it anyway

55 DB: =alright

56 DW: =not the budget, its not the (1.0) its almost

57 DB: [[no its it's not

58 DW: [[some of those things

59 DB: [[No it's not the portfolio

60 DW: [[it's almost (inaudible) blind LBC business plan isn't it (0.5)

61 DB: [[it's not the [[yeah. ye::ah

62 yeah we'll it will fit within the business plan (0.5) it's saying (1.0)

63 DW: It's what we're gonna do when

64 DB: yeah uhm. No its not the portfolio, its things like when will every

65 project have a have a quality plan be signed off by quality

66 DW: mm

67 DB: Uhmmm

68 DB: = when will er when will er all the BP4's have their KRA's so it's

69 very (0.5) It's quite internal (1.0) when wha what recruitment action

70 plans do we have in place (3.0) it's stuff like that (0.5) so you might

71 (4.0) I was gonna to give you might (4.0) I was gonna to give you a

72 quick look at it and you can

73 DW: [[No'll decide what to call it when I see it (laughing tone)

74 DB: yeah alright (0.5)

75 DW: Time scales for everything,

76 DW: chnhee hhh . (DW chuckles) (6.0)

77 DW: you'll do better than that (1.0)

78 DB: right

79 DW: (0.5) so anything else you, you think of if you can let me know

80 DB: =yes

81 DW: =By by Friday

82 DB: yes

- 83 DW: midweek, yeap
- 84 DB: =yeap (4.5) (shuffles paper on the desk in front of him)
- 85 DW: Tam's replacement.

- 1 CE She has seen the memo (.)
- 2 HT Right
- 3 CE Eh probably remember it better than I can (.)
- 4 HT [[Right (0.5)
- 5 CE In fact (.) So how did it go with the chaps ?
- 6 HT Well. I think quite well uhm (1.0) obviously their their view of what. if
- 7 you want I'm trying to do and the SPG trying to do and especially what your
- 8 tryin to do is evolving as as times gone on. I don't know whether you first
- 9 mentioned it to Otto, but obviously
- 10 CE (inaudible)
- 11 HT=yeah since then its got bigger and bigger (.) I mean know he's beginning
- 12 to realise what we are talking about and what we are asking him to do and
- 13 he's a little bit. I guess he's finding it a bit. um he's apprehensive to say
- 14 the (laugh) to say the least
- 15 CE I had that conversation with him yesterday
- 16 HT yes he's a um. I don't think he realised quite what we we're saying (0.5)
- 17 an initially he thought we just ought to. he ought to communicate just a
- 18 little bit more with people across the functions
- 19 CE hhhe has a an enduring. belief that he's sought of one of these
- 20 people whose seen through thick and thin in relation to people
- 21 HT mmh
- 22 CE rather than singly in needing some structuring behind people ehm
- 23 HT mmh formal
- 24 CE well I had a chat with Paul Seymour. yesterday
- 25 HT mmh
- 26 CE On the basis that (phone) I needed to know what he felt about it all (phone)
- 27 HT mmmh
- 28 CE he discloses views as being (phone)
- 29 reasonably professionally anti uhm a concept which I (phone)
- 30 HT ((really?
- 31 CE find interesting
- 32 HT wish he'd (phone at which CE point Stands up and turns to his desk)
- 33 HT made a bit more clear at the time he:e knew that three or four
- 34 months ago when it was first mooted [(phone) CE gets up & answers]
- 35 CE ((Chris E****, Chris E**** yes okay .sure. (turns to HT) excuse me.(7 minute call)
- 36 CE sorry that that was a merger interruption (cough like laugh)
- 37 HT a slight distraction rather a major distraction
- 38 CE = you have to be careful what you say when that things on don't want
- 39 any secret messages on it
- 40 LW oh dear! (chuckle from LW, HT and CE initiated by CE)
- 41 CE what a shame

42 HT I don't think you said anything

43 CE = (mumble) oh don't worry I was very careful

44 HT ehmm (0.5) I think that's important though because, one I don't think. hehehe was

45 terribly vociferous at the meeting, the SPG meeting was some time ago

46 admittedly

47 CE =that's why I went to see him

48 HT yeah mmh he certainly didn't express any big misgivings at the

49 time, the thing that he's probably quite right of is inn a way you're moving faster

50 than the SPG because you've gone quite a long way in sort of encouraging (2.0)

51 CE [[well I mean the way I see, the game I've been playing in a sense with

52 the two of them, Richard and Otto has been to be more more sort of. to

53 demand more of the role than I actually intend to get in the first few

54 months simply because they were being a little bit dopey about sort of

55 galvanising themselves at all uhmm and I think I'm now reasonably comfy

56 that that the first stage is ehm along the lines that I gather sort of

57 emerged yesterday whereby uhmm eh they set up some kind of co-ordinating

58 chin wag session uhm try and do a bit of team building using their

59 personalities and uhmm b. they get involved in discussing with heads of

60 the service areas what service standards should apply (0.5) and become

61 involved in (phone)

62 for instance Chris N**** exercise in establishing services not to own

63 HT ((mmh

64 CE it, not to drive it or anything but at the moment to

65 HT ((mmh

66 CE establish that in a sense they own as much of the veto, that that they

67 have just as much the strongest voice yet they have no particular interest in how the factory produces the

68 service

69 HT yes

70 CE ehr I think that that will meet the sensitivities that Paul was

71 expressing. clearly he does not want his new chaps to. be told how to run

72 things nor does he think that my chaps can

73 HT ((absolutely not

74 CE = well I don't want them to either

75 HT no

76 CE Uhm so I've tried to say to Otto and Richard that the key things are that

77 they should care about everything rather than just their own little bit of

78 the world. that they should transmit that care uhm through uhm into other

79 people caring through these kin:a co-ordinating type activities in a format

80 that I'm happy to be very flexible also and three that they should through

81 their own personal activity ensure that their key cares are being met by

82 the providers of the services

83 HT okay

84 CE and that to back all that up, fourthly, what I need to do and, you in a

85 sense through this paper need to do is, to create a climate of

86 understanding that that's what's going on, at the SPG level

87 HT =Right

88 CE =So that we don't have, ever get a position where we go so far and then

89 someone won't play ball

90 HT =that's right

91 CE =and you then go to his boss and his boss doesn't support what

92 we were trying to do.

93 HT =absolutely

94 CE so I try to say to Otto that you know his his boyish charm might get us

95 so far down the road of(.) relationships with people (in breath) but one day

96 someone will be a a right bastard and sort of stick nnnunn stick ata

97 certain point and if he doesn't, if he hasn't already cleared (.) the sort of

98 authorities before he gets to that position then he'll have problem because

99 the discussion about authorities is about concrete incident rather than principle.

100 concrete instance, everyone has their own personal view and so

101 you know you can't can't be sure that you get the right outcome.

102 HT=mmh

103 CE so establish the principle and eh then you don't have those problems (1.0)

104 but he seemed reasonably happy as long as I wasn't gonna drive him

105 to hard down the road

106 HT that's Otto?

107 CE yeah

108 (0.5) yes now Richard's more enthusiastic as it happens Richard of

109 course is the one that we wanted to be more enthusiastic and that

110 needs I think more of it

111 HT =mmh

112 CE so I'm reasonably comfy. I think on the on Otto's side we've got

113 something going with Chris N*** that on mortgages and services there.

114 and I've been using .a another tactic is I've used Tony W***** as a kind

115 of non threatening person to seek to co-ordinate this (.) push this service

116 generally on the basis that the people out there would not find Tony

117 threatening. whereas they might find the other things threatening.

118 HT mmhm

119 CE eh so in the sense of getting the job done (0.5) making the consultation

120 happen and things Tony will keep shooting I mean people can take it from

121 him no problem, and setting the standard is where sort a Otto and Richard

122 come in

123 HT yeah

124 CE they've got to build the bridges to allow them to set the standards (1.0)
 125 that looks good
 126 HT=they've got to learn about the business first haven't they?
 127 CE well th well that's the other thing we've got ta do
 128 HT= teach them about what communication should be with the ehm with
 129 those closer to or are at a minimum at the moment anyway
 130 CE = yes .I tell you I came across uuhm I was given a load of bumph from
 131 A*** D*****, this week . one of the things they've done is. I find it
 132 frustrating that they do things, that they actually do things that are merely
 133 aspirations as far as I'm concerned (0.5) and they have published some
 134 little (0.5) ehm or ina starting to publish a series of product guides for
 135 their field force (0.5) the interesting thing is not only do they talk about
 136 the products, the market and how to find the people who're gonna sell the
 137 product but they then talk about how te process an application what your
 138 client will receive when your application goes in.
 139 HT =mmhm
 140 CE =what he'll then receive latter if he doesn't pay his premiums
 141 when he gets to the end of a year when he tries to eh make a claim
 142 so you know for all of the live plans. they're selling exactly what
 143 happens every step of the process
 144 HT yeah
 145 CE thats
 146 HT ((totally and actually
 147 CE ((exactly what we are trying to do
 148 HT yeah
 149 CE ((that's the end of this one
 150 CE so uhm think we know what we're pitching at
 151 HT what about Paul his his misgivings? did they did they end purely
 152 where they, he thought Otto or Richard might actually start
 153 interfering in the, day to day operations of some of his people?
 154 CE Oh I think put simply, you know he's got uhm he's reasonably
 155 happy with the project control approach I mean they're not in a
 156 wretched position they've got projects an developments they want done
 157 HT =aaha
 158 CE and generally speaking they managed those things quite
 159 well.ehm .err the problem comes really in the(.) getting the
 160 common vision about the development rather than getting it done
 161 ch (in breath) uhm and essentially I think Tony has mostly made
 162 sure that things get done, but marketing people, ie now Otto and
 163 Richard have not.(0.5) created a sort of (0.5) the climate in which
 164 people have always understood what's goin on.

165 HT=yes
 166 CE so they've got to do that as part of the developments but(.) Paul only
 167 foresees all of that as only good (0.5) (in breath) he sees the creation of a
 168 forum where people meet as only good (0.5) the bit that he'd be worried
 169 about is if his people were being told what to do effectively ehmm nn I'd
 170 like (0.5) I've tried to talk about setting standards rather than telling him
 171 what to do. its the company that should set the standards
 172 HT but even then they (0.5) yes
 173 CE ((and its us that should propose them but its his people that
 174 should contribute mostly to them but none of that is to do with
 175 how you actually do your job uhmm
 176 HT I I've got this kind of, sort of idea in my mind of Otto goin down
 177 and saying look what we really need to be up, up in the industry
 178 (0.5) on the (.) this customer service side is to be able to do this
 179 this and this through a year, through the life of a policy whatever.
 180 and you know "what do you think of that Chris?" or whoever
 181 happens to be the representative at the meeting and it won't be
 182 (.)just the two of them either (1.0)
 183 HT= and there's gonna be other people there who are gonna say its not (.)
 184 CE ((yes?
 185 HT possible because of this or whatever so I I can't ever see it
 186 being a, well I hope it never is an instruction obviously it is gonna
 187 break down if that happens, its not an instruction b' your tryin to
 188 influence him, to change his, his direction aren't you?
 189 CE ((stance really
 190 HT an and and if they can feel that that's what they are there for
 191 and they're certainly in no position to order anyone to do anything
 192 you know that's not th. the point (.) of it. its just to try and
 193 influence him, this is the way the company wants to move
 194 CE ((If I could. eh If I could put some sort of historical perspective
 195 into it the. we use these products. we think about a product
 196 development
 197 HT=right
 198 CE=rather than anything else we use product specification to make
 199 make the development happen (1.5)
 200 and uhmm (3.0) well the way I try to do it is that we try to issue a
 201 very loose draft of the thing to the key people who are involved in
 202 the development and get their comments an things, at that stage
 203 my view is that absolutely everything is up for grabs, nothing is
 204 sitting concrete at all (0.5)when we've got all that we issue ehmm

205 an outline specification and at that stage (1.0) what we're saying
 206 (.) is this is what we propose to do
 207 HT =mmh
 208 CE and this is how we propose to do it, please from your own little
 209 corner of the world tell me, confirm that you can do it, what it will
 210 cost you to do it and by when you'll do it . but please don't give me
 211 comments about whether it is sensible, desirable and done the best
 212 way coz all that should have already happened (0.5) the third stage
 213 is you say right we've heard all that, practical stuff and we've
 214 know decided what we're actually gonna do and here is an final
 215 specification for it, which we ask the SMC to approve. that sort of
 216 thing. Now (0.5)the vital stage is that draft one, and uhm. uhm.the
 217 work leading up to the draft one, e n' in the olden days, ehm before
 218 John D**** (.) the marketing area which were used to write quite
 219 useful background briefs on developments.which were then used as
 220 a basis for discussion in order to create the draft em John really
 221 just put a stop to that. I think actuarials side tried to (.) get round
 222 him, by calling meetings in which the marketing person would
 223 explain the background etc (.) to all the doers and uhm we'd try to
 224 encourage the sort of discussion about where if only you'd build it
 225 this way rather than that way it would be a lot cheaper or a lot
 226 better or something. uhm and (.) that happened successful for
 227 example on living assurance that was a very successful ehm er
 228 sort of set of discussions , whereas on some other plans it hasn't
 229 been very very successful and its really I think getting back. to the
 230 (.) beginnings of what used to exist
 231 HT =mmhm
 232 CE=ehm (0.5) of getting the thinking done up fro front allow people
 233 to share in the thinking a bit . and then havin dun it to to to sort of
 234 recall what it is so that people know why thei::r. no I think that's
 235 where we trying to get to an in a sense we're we're reinventing the circle
 236 HT=yeah
 237 CE in the old days it was a boring old ITT paper driven system
 238 .you know, you cocouldn't do this stage unless you did that stage in
 239 the system (in breath)
 240 HT ((yeah
 241 CE um an that was the whole problem you see it got to to the level
 242 where that marketing brief was er very sort of minimal, uninteresting useless
 243 sort a document (cough)
 244 CE that was produced because it was part of the process and you
 245 couldn't do the next stage until you'd done it

246 HT yeah
 247 CE and as soon as that happened then clearly it was a prime
 248 candidate for cutting it out
 249 HT mmh
 250 CE the real problem was that it had been allowed to become a sort
 251 of desultory document (2.0)
 252 so what are we goin to do about this note (1.0) in the SPG ?
 253 HT well eh yeah thats::s yeh that's just one part of it
 254 CE mmh
 255 HT really because as far as that's concerned I think its basically
 256 okay, has David come back officially
 257 CE =no ?
 258 HT well the thing is the whole things up in the air as far as he's
 259 concerned anyway for obvious reasons and I don't think there's any
 260 necessity to pursue that specific
 261 CE =no no I mean cause you've used it as a way. because you've you've
 262 registered a general
 263 HT well I think uhm I should expand on that a bit, present it the
 264 SPG and make sure we get their support
 265 CE and then just accept it?
 266 HT((and then encourage yeh encourage them to get on with it and
 267 then. the. two . uhm routes working together should sort of. get
 268 down the organisation and change the thinking because people have
 269 got to think correctly haven't they? an an this is what were tryin
 270 to do (in breath) wwhen there's certainly no question of anybody (.)
 271 having (1.0) official power as it were, I mean what we don't want
 272 CE ((no I think we need terms of reference
 273 HT ((as it were
 274 CE rather than sort of er authorities
 275 HT mmhm but you see its difficult to work out in terms of well its
 276 difficult for me to do any terms of reference or to work out in
 277 terms of reference for example, because I don't understand
 278 functions well enough (1.5) you know its
 279 CE ((well the first thing ((the first step is to write down the
 280 terms of reference and I think in a sense Otto wrote that we've got
 281 to do that. it it seems to me that we need to have this discussion
 282 (0.5) at your meeting next Wednesday to set the tone
 283 HT =yep
 284 CE a bit of feedback from that they can then write down some
 285 terms of reference

286 HT [[I mean if they thought more about (0.5) what sort of people
 287 they want (2.0) you know because I I've. see .you you've got thee
 288 these ththese polarised (.) well these two views you've got to have
 289 someone whose influential and you've also got to have somebody
 290 who really understands
 291 CE I don't know I haven't discussed
 292 HT= yeah I know we very very briefly discussed it
 293 CE=yep
 294 HT=yesterday, but I I'm just worried that you have somebody whose
 295 too high up in in the group and he doesn't understand the nitty gritty
 296 then you. just lots and lots of missed opportunities. something
 297 comes up its not uhm answered immediately and its put off till the
 298 next meeting and all your doing is delaying (1.0)
 299 CE yes, I mean my. if you take Otto's area, I would like to get down
 300 to the Gorden F**** people running some of the meetings with Otto
 301 kinda sitting in acting as a chairman, it seems to me that you can
 302 HT=what with Tom and Greg B****, that sorta set up/
 303 CE ((yes yes it seems to me that you can have, you can operate as a
 304 sorta pretty neutral chairman in that sorta circumstances 'n I
 305 sometimes do that whilst uhm having your guy being the player
 306 from your end uhm I think that would work uhm in that area
 307 SEC Chris can I ask you a quickie ? (65 second interruption)
 308 HT the othe:r thing that I'd like to put into my little document (.)
 309 and its just a (2.0) (out breath) I suppose fairly ethereal (.) type
 310 statement and that's you now that .one of the first things that Gary
 311 said when he came in here and that's the first thing that I noticed
 312 when I came in here. perhaps I wasn't quite so vociferous as Gary, was
 313 that everybody always seems to be tied up with meetings (1.0)
 314 and I don't know whether its true ,I'd justa like to hear your
 315 comment, but it may be because so many people are trying to
 316 achieve things on a bilateral basis and its actually when you
 317 discover what kind of meeting it is its normally only two people in
 318 a meeting, and it could be that this would actually assist in that,
 319 because it tends to be iterative doesn't it. if if if they you're trying
 320 to influence several functions and praps a couple of layers in each
 321 function very very often its done on a bilateral basis but of course
 322 that immediately is iterative because you've (.) gotta comeback and
 323 see the next person and that's changed the circumstances of your
 324 discussion with him (in breath) and you carry on like that and it
 325 just seems a bit er slower process then if you hava a group or dare
 326 I say committee, coz committees got pretty awful connatations as

327 well. bu but 'n if its run properly, you should be able to get further
 328 a a lot more quickly (1.0) in that sort of (1.0) meeting than than
 329 the the sort of traditional bilateral type
 330 CE ((well my impression)) is that most people (1.0)
 331 don't let topics move ahead in committees they want time to think
 332 about it before
 333 HT =mmh
 334 CE =they become too publicly committed
 335 HT (0.5) uhmm (2.0)
 336 HT((but that just means that the things not being run correctly I
 337 feel
 338 CE or it means that the problems of of such a size, I mean what I
 339 try to do is to get (1.0) in running a project or something(.) I try to
 340 have the meeting every (.) two weeks if its (.) quick
 341 change month otherwise (0.5) which is only
 342 CE ((mmhm)
 343 maybe only an hour or so long which uhmm (0.5) basically just goes
 344 through all the areas that are involved and all the things that
 345 should be done (1.5) (papers shuffled)
 346 HT yep
 347 CE everything's hunky dory just pass straight onto the next one. if
 348 there's a problem area simply determine who has to get together to
 349 resolve it. I think those meetings are very useful (1.5) whe::n
 350 everybody is collaborating in that style of meeting, but if you have
 351 someone (name inaudible)can become difficult (0.5) so that's
 352 probably that's all it is (1.0) but I mean I'm n rather an anti
 353 meetings person . anti big meetings person
 354 HT (yeah
 355 CE because my observations. is normally. is there's one or more
 356 bored people in the meeting
 357 HT yes that's the problem
 358 HT I think that's why its(.)really yep
 359 CE ((uhm and I also think, I mean th' other. I'll tell you one reason
 360 why people are in meetings, people are in meetings because people
 361 like being in em you won't believe, how many people try an invite
 362 themselves to meetings when they hear thatthat they're being set up
 363 HT extraordinary
 364 CE= don't you think I ought to be at this meeting in reference to etc
 365 etc I usually say no its especially for (inaudible)
 366 HT ((well that's, isn't that very often because people don't know.
 367 exactly what the nature of that meeting what's gonna be goin on in it

368 CE =yeah
 369 HT((in other words they're all ad hoc (0.5) and that's not necessary
 370 CE ((no no even regular meetings
 371 HT well you see I had, I mean, I'm trying to draw, I know it's very
 372 very difficult , it's a different kind of industry and everything else
 373 but it is odd that both Gary who came from fast moving consumer
 374 goods 'n I came
 375 CE ((mmh
 376 HT from industrial goods (.) background but w we both came in here
 377 and we just couldn't believe how much people were tied up in
 378 meetings an I've been tryn ta you know for sometime tryna
 379 understand why that might be and a lot of it is because of the
 380 complexity of the business, probably, but I think there are some
 381 (inaudible)
 382 CE ((I Don't
 383 HT very few
 384 CE ((there are a lot of meetings, I mean I have a lot on (0.5) mm I
 385 mean meeting is the wrong word for it mostly its one to one
 386 stuff (0.5) but I mean
 387 HT ((well that's what))I'm saying I guess. that the excuse is always
 388 meetings, but yes I think. I find that (.) odd because
 389 CE well you've you've gotta (.) you find it odd that people
 390 communicate on a one to one sense?
 391 HT ((yep
 392 HT to the extent they do, in other words, there's too much ad hoc
 393 going on, there ought to be more system, unless, I mean ad hoc
 394 should only be for things that can't be run in a systematic way, a lot of the
 395 business 'n a business like this ought to be. I mean ought
 396 to be 80 20 oughten it? 80% of things ought to be eh systematic, in
 397 fact ought to be 90: 10, and 10 for the ad hoc. well it seems
 398 everything in our business is ad hoc (3.0) I mean
 399 CE ((yea::h
 400 HT its very much a generalisation, because I don't know the
 401 details n that's one of my, weaknesses obviously just sitting over
 402 there you don't know, but I just get this feeling that, its very very
 403 difficult to to streamline things because so much is done on ona
 404 ad hoc basis
 405 CE yes, you see it's funny, I would characterise the problem as
 406 being the other way round. I there's too much paper because to

407 many people want to know too much about too many things.
 408 actually. its quite interesting. now there may be many meetings
 409 because too many people want to get involved in the meetings
 410 HT= well eh, perhaps you ought to analyse exactly who gets what
 411 bits of paper and whether they really need them, but but there's, for
 412 sure there's is some. I think there's a lot of (.) lack of knowledge at
 413 places where they ought to have knowledge and where influences
 414 ought to be brought
 415 CE ((now that's
 416 HT to bear
 417 CE now that is a different matter I think that is true uhm I'm a
 418 great believeer in having minutes of meetings n them being
 419 circulated so that
 420 HT = people know what happened
 421 CE = people know what happened
 422 HT =mmh
 423 CE =pepeople who where there know what happn'd
 424 HT=yeah
 425 CE=becoz they
 426 HT no its really just that. I mean the key . there are key.key
 427 functions and they don't seem to meet regularly, to make sure that
 428 things get done, and they ought to be led by you guys. (1.0)
 429 CE well I think, yeah, no I accept all that I
 430 HT =mmh
 431 CE I think the main point really is that tha though you might not
 432 realise it there's been a massive amount of contact across the
 433 divisions (.) that's always been on a project basis, its the classic
 434 thing if you if you hold a regular meeting with the sales chaps if
 435 they talk about the sales result at all I can guarantee they'll talk
 436 about the problems (.) uhm very rarely er we
 437 HT ((that's why)
 438 CE have items one on the agenda . what have we done well this
 439 month, an how can we learn from that , hhow can we do more of it.
 440 HT =well I
 441 CE =its the same sort of thing we don't we only hav we only have
 442 meetings when there are problems or projects(1.0) tha::t is we
 443 don't invest in the time that's necessary together tto free wheel a
 444 bit to share things a bit without it being to close, I think that's fair. (1.0)
 445 HT =You can't, that came up you know I mean Otto said well what
 446 about sales, an I, my personal view and and again you'll probably
 447 disagree, my personal view was they ough they should be out of it

448 (0.5) basically Otto (.) should speak for sales(.) it should be his job
 449 to always
 450 CE ((yeah
 451 HT know
 452 CE((yeah
 453 HT what they will accept and what they won't accept . agency
 454 broker
 455 CE ((mmh
 456 HT whatever and in in this sort of committee he should be(.)
 457 always (0.5) you know basically there should be a consistency
 458 between marketing and sales anyway and he should be able to
 459 represent sales's opinion to bring sales people in is always a
 460 disaster because then you do get (0.5) totally the wrong
 461 impression they will always want to moan about
 462 some perhaps to (inaudible)
 463 CE (but if you bring sales people in its got to be very specific it's
 464 got to be there's a note these three letters how can we improve
 465 them or something
 466 HT =yep
 467 CE =or erm this meeting is designed for you to dump your buck
 468 bucket on me therefore all I'm gonna do is listen
 469 HT =mmh
 470 CE =they like those meetings they er
 471 HT =they make them feel better now and again yeah. but I
 472 CE =thats right
 473 HT =but I think in a regular way they're terrible because it makes
 474 them spend so much time bitching about something that effects
 475 them (1.0) you know something went wrong
 476 CE ((yes
 477 HT yesterday you've got a telling off from from a good associate
 478 or whatever an thats all you ever hear about
 479 CE =mmh (2.0)
 480 CE I think that er the problem of meetings is one thats quite (0.5) a
 481 lot more difficult than we were suggesting
 482 HT =mmh
 483 CE =I mean Gary hates long meetings full stop.
 484 HT yeh::h he he says something at SPG meetings and I mean thats.
 485 er I (1.0) don't (1.0)
 486 CE I mean I can accomplish more in 45 minutes with him than I can
 487 with most people in half a day
 488 HT yeh

489 CE and satisfactorily accomplish it. but its its as much a matter of
 490 (.) minds that. can jump around quickly as it is of any thing else
 491 HT mmh mmh (0.5) okay . well. I'll draw up
 492 CE can I be of any more help? (2.5)
 493 HT I don't think. So I think what we said earlier is is the best way
 494 to go, I'll tryn (2.0) put my thoughts forward again (2.0) and get the
 495 the er SPG behind it uhm I think, I hope we don't, we're not, well I guess you might want it dealt with uhm
 496 on Wednesday but it seems
 497 CE = I'm relaxed about that
 498 HT well it may not
 499 CE ((we've got budgets to work (inaudible)
 500 HT well exactly it looks as though it. last October. the October
 501 meeting stuffs now goin to be dealt with in November (in breath) an
 502 unless something comes forward .the salary sales force has been
 503 knocked into touch .coz its dealt with in the budget.
 504 CE or not as the case may be
 505 HT or not as the case may be yeah (in breath)
 506 CE mmhm I mean I eh you know originally the figures
 507 HT ((I'm still chasing Geoff for the numbers
 508 CE Oh are you? chchc

Doing 26/10

MANAGEMENT

To: O. Txxxxxxx
R.S. Hxxxxx
P.B. Hxxxxxxx

From: C.D. Exxxx

Date: 29th September 1988

"Matrix Management"

I attach a copy of a note dealing with Mortgage Brand management.

It is now becoming urgent that Richard and Otto establish themselves as Brand leaders for the corporate effort.

- A HL continue to seek to dominate mortgages
- Investment activity needs co-ordinating in the wake of Richard's strategy.
- Mike Wxxxxx has kicked-off a joint group on pensions which he wants us to run.
- We want to review the life range in a way that involves other areas.

I am asking Joan to fix a session next week to discuss. Your ideas on how we are going to do it for that discussion, please.

Aw.7

CDE/JL

MEMORANDUM

To: David Bxxxxxxx .

From: Chris Exxxxx

Date: 27th September 1988

C.C. M.G. Jxxxx
 O. Txxxxxxx
 H. Txxxxxxx

Matrix Management for Mortgage Business

Following our recent discussion, you asked me to set down my thoughts on this subject.

Firstly, I define the scope of "Mortgage Business" as including:

- Axxx Fxxx "lending products"
- Axxx Bxxx "repayment vehicles" - both life and pensions products - sold in conjunction with internally or externally sourced mortgages.

In general terms, our objective must be to maximise long-term contribution to corporate profits from these products. In the pursuit of this, the use of external lenders also needs to be "managed" to some degree.

Thoughts on Matrix Management

Organisations which have a functional hierarchy but are complex in nature need to entrust the management of various cross-functional corporate activities to individual managers (who may operate as off-line project managers or also as functional managers in the line). These cross-functional activities include:

- setting/monitoring standards: e.g. personnel practices or FSA compliance.
- ensuring adequate financial controls: e.g. Internal Audit or Chief Actuary's overseeing of profitability of ABAC.
- "brand management" ensuring that corporate resources are applied to maximum effect to maximise brand contribution to profits.

This concept of brand management has several components:

- responsibility within the corporate planning process for setting priorities, objectives, etc. for development and operational activity. This extends to all aspects of the marketing mix, including product design and merchandising, service standards, remuneration, pricing.

- responsibility for monitoring standards and co-ordinating activity performed within other functions in support of the brand.
- hands-on responsibility for some specific aspects of brand promotion often including final product specification, "packaging/literature", advertising, etc.

This brand management approach does not supplant functional responsibilities or hierarchy. Rather, it means that some functional managers have two bosses! We do not think it peculiar that cross functional responsibilities apply in the areas of control and standard setting such as compliance or audit. With cross-functional brand management, the extra benefit is the working together of those in different functions where otherwise they may sometimes not work in harmony.

Application to AB

The approach has, I think, most been discussed in relation to Investment Marketing, though this has yet to be fully carried through in practice.

For mortgages I believe that the approach is reasonably straightforward to envisage. Brand management should be responsible for proposing developments, sales objectives and service standards across all functions to senior management as part of corporate planning. The proposals, as modified/agreed, then become the brand managers' responsibility to execute.

However, the senior directors/managers in the supporting functions will now have clear, corporately agreed, individual responsibilities to contribute to the brand programmes. The brand manager will rely heavily on the professional expertise of others in executing his programmes. He may well establish some form of cross-functional reporting/meeting structure to aid his task and achieve team spirited common vision. This cross-functional involvement and commitment to the brand must be fostered.

You mentioned a few points of possible difficulty:

- your own personal remit from the AEG Board to ensure the profitability of ABHL. I see no essential difference between this overall responsibility and that of Paul Seymour for life/pension product profitability. I suggest satisfactory constraints can be established to ensure pricing does not get out of hand. Such an approach already applies in annuity pricing where we are subject to interest rate fluctuations.
- the technical difficulty of negotiating financing, etc. for ABHL. I see this as a clear responsibility adequately covered in the current organisation. The brand managers, having established the desired product parameters from market considerations, will wish to rely on the experts for such negotiations. A possible parallel might be in ABIS's functional responsibility to set individual trust/fund investment specifications in line with our more general marketing objectives and product specifications.

- the importance of loan underwriting in maintaining profitability. Your implied worry is that Marketing might overrule individual underwriting decisions, I believe. In practice, as with life/PHI underwriting, we need to set underwriting standards as part of the specification process and then trust the line management to do their job.
- ultimate responsibility for product specification. This, I believe, is a clear brand management responsibility which should lead to a proper specification circulated for comment and finally approved by the SOC. But it must be recognised that, just as with fund specifications mentioned above, the "experts" will have significant contribution to the specification process. As mentioned earlier, the aim is to have full involvement and commitment from all involved in the brand.
- your concern that developments have not moved too smoothly in the past - indeed a degree of impatience with Marketing over some issues. I guess that to a fair degree uncertainty about individuals' roles and lack of brand direction including all aspects of "mortgage business" are to blame. Even today we are uncertain about our attitudes to external lenders in support of the brand.

My aim, as we discussed, is for Otto to produce his proposed strategy and action plan for the brand in conjunction with the key people involved. I believe he is seeing you this week to that effect. With a clear corporately agreed strategy and responsibilities, I believe we can make things work better in future.

I hope this note helps you in the preparation of your note to the SPG. I am happy to discuss further if this will help.

Curtis

CDE/JL

- 1 DB: Its been a department that's been here ever since. well err at the
 2 forefront in the fifties of having computerised systems because er if you
 3 want to have a booking system, world wide its fairly clear that you do
 4 need some sort of computerised system and even that. and even that gone.
 5 even the guy:s in the fifties andso we. we::re quite at the forefront of
 6 many computerised systems (1.0) erm (1.0) then er. but in those days er
 7 what you built was (.) er the. that the IT division was set up and really
 8 evolved into two chunks. one department was the computer development
 9 department that built huge monolithic systems.that had very large
 10 computers in central place and ran er systems all over the world but were
 11 very centralised and all the power and control was very centralised an
 12 there was a small group of people ehm based on the operations research
 13 group that went around providing quick and dirty computer solutions for
 14 managers er in a very unstructured way (0.5)
- 15 LW: mhm
- 16 DB:= in very much a sorta skunk work app aproach to it and er the new.
 17 about two years ago erm IM decided they needed to change (.) to line
 18 themselves up with the way the airline was changing
- 19 LW: mhm
- 20 DB: and so they broke down their old structures and built up a new
 21 structure which which created fourteen business centres. ehm and the
 22 fourteen business centres focus on fourteen parts of the airline. (.) The
 23 airlines broken down into fourteen parts by IM and each business centre
 24 headed by a business centre manager focuses on one part of the business
- 25 LW: and you have autonomy* over those or ?
- 26 DB: [[autonomy .I don't know as I'd use the word autonomy I I'd put it this
 27 way I'm responsible for providing the IT the total IT service to my
 28 customers (.)
- 29 LW: ye:s
- 30 DB:= this defined group in the airline erm (1.0) but as in any major
 31 corporation I can't go off. I have (2.0) I have linkages that I should maintain
 32 for the corporate good. for my colleague business centres.
- 33 LW: =right
- 34 DB: uhm and indeed for the corporate overall. coz you get customers asking
 35 for things for themselves. which don't necessarily (0.5) fit the corporate
 36 (.) mission. and so:: you've got this delicate business of trying to manage
 37 (0.5) your customers requirements whilst still having (0.5) the need t:o
 38 (2.0) make sure that this is meeting the corporate mission and objectives (2.0)
- 39 LW: yeah so your balan balancing the long term strategy with probably the
 40 short term
- 41 DB: [[with short term yes. or indeed for example uhm (1.5) the. one of the

42 major difficulties you've got to manage. probably yeah almost the top of
 43 the list is how you allocate your resources.

44 LW: =mmh

45 DB: = now allocating resources. across 14 business centres err with 14
 46 sets of different customers is a very difficult task

47 LW: [[mmhm ar are we talking about you managing that in or (inaudible)

48 DB:= a::h well yes there's within. first of all you've got how do you manage
 49 your resources within your business centre which is

50 LW:[[mhm

51 DB:=what your supposed to do (2.0) but then you've got. we come up. these
 52 14 business centres come up and face into three general managers (1.0)

53 LW: yes

54 DB: =and they've got responsibility for (1.0) apportioning re results across
 55 the board uh:m and so its a combination of the business centre managers
 56 the general managers (.) and the customers (.) getting together and trying
 57 to apportion those results. those resources (.) but that's. err very difficult
 58 task

59 LW: mhm

60 DB:= because each set of customers (3.0) argues that. may not fully believe
 61 .but argues that his case is the most important (1.0) and if it is not the
 62 most important it certainly is an excellent case, that its gonna make a lot
 63 of money for the company or save alotta money for the company and
 64 therefore should be done

65 LW: yes

66 DB: erhm (1.0) an::d er. So. that's probably is a major issue that we have to
 67 resolve and is a constant difficult act to balance (2.0) uhm (1.0) so these
 68 business centres have been set up err for about I suppose they're about 18
 69 months a::nd they are I I think they are doing reasonably well (1.) uhm (1.0)
 70 what they have created is a body of (1.0) IM people (.) that are (.) more
 71 customer focused. than ever before (1.0) and that's created tensions within
 72 the IM division because (clears throat) servicing these. this peripheral ring
 73 of business centres are the departments of infrastructure, tactics,
 74 strategy, data centres

75 LW: [[mhmm

76 DB: the central departments that you have to have in any kind of company.
 77 If we were a large software company for example we would have a similar
 78 kinda set up, where we'd have a central services (.) err and then business
 79 centres dotted around the outside, that actually dealt with the customers.
 80 and er the difficulty that we've had is that tensions have arisen between
 81 the business centres and the centre of IM er because the business centres

- 82 have become more and more focused on what the customers need (1.0) and
 83 that has er clashed with the erm (2.0) the different culture thata existed
 84 in the centre of IM which was to a certain extent. this is probably a bit
 85 cruel but to a certain extent was very much sorta research and
 86 development sorta almost university er er culture
- 87 LW: =mhm
- 88 DB: = because its only a. i:it really it was only about two yearsa ago that
 89 we started taking people without degrees (.) up until about two years ago
 90 everybody in IM had a degree and er there was very much a feeling of a
 91 university about the place
- 92 LW: mhm
- 93 DB: and er part of the creation of the business centres is to focus on. is to
 94 remember that we are a business and we have to support a business
- 95 LW:=yeah
- 96 DB: ehmm (.) but that (.) tension is. is slowly being addressed. I think it
 97 will always exist but its slowly being addressed by erm (.) by a a series of
 98 of moves that that are you know. that are. that seem to be. that seem to me
 99 to be actually having some results. So we're beginning to tackle it (0.5)
- 100 LW:= how's it? how's that manifested itself in your job ?(inaudible)
- 101 DB: [(In breath)okay. I'll give you an example for (1.0) you. we can be.
 102 we're developing a project hem that er. that needs to erm to have what
 103 they call a case tool. A case tool is a. an expensive piece of software that
 104 uhm will help you build your system now the thing is that these things are
 105 not stand alone they have many interfaces. IM division is looking at case
 106 tools (.) but they are slowly going through the research and development
 107 testing. but I can't wait for that. I need one now (.)
- 108 LW: mhm
- 109 DB:= so my my local people have been of and seen something they want,
 110 done some tests. said it will do, now do I go .for what my local people say
 111 they want and get on with it .or do I wait for for th::e centre of IM to say
 112 well .you know if we're gonna have something we're gonnahave to have
 113 something across ev everywhere because then we'll getthe most benefit
 114 out of it and the company will benefit uhm but this is not satisfying the
 115 needs of my customers (1.0)
- 116 LW: =-yeah
- 117 DB:=which is a three anda half million project and you know I am. because
 118 the time scales are different because you know you cann't have a day when
 119 you say right. all the bets are off. stop everything (.) and now we start.
 120 We are going through that very difficult period at the moment with the
 121 centre of IM who ar::e always. The centre of IM who are always. centre of
 122 IM are the people that wi::ll track will will er who. they they have been

- 123 given the task of being pathfinders through this jungle of IT. new
 124 technology coming on them all the time uhm and er they're the people
 125 who're givn the job of tracking way through this finding the path and
 126 they're a department to find the path, department to lay the road
 127 LW: mhm
 128 DB: = and the business centres are supposed to run on their own. The
 129 trouble is that the timing is wrong because the business centres are up
 130 there with the pathfinders saying we wanna go this way and the centres
 131 saying no we wanna go here (1.0) uhm (1.0)
 132 LW: but your position would require you to co-ordinate that or to (0.5) or to
 133 DB: [[it it
 134 LW: manage that?
 135 DB: [[requires me to. try and make some judgement about whether do I do I
 136 do I penalise my customers. and (0.5) wait for a decision from the centre or
 137 do I take the risk and go off on my own.
 138 LW: mhm
 139 DB: a::nd erm (1.0) I haven't got total autonomy to do that
 140 LW: no
 141 DB: but I've gotta reasonable amount autonomy to do it. erm (1.0) but it
 142 would mean
 143 LW: =mhm
 144 DB:=that I'd have a lot of arguments for example its its a lot more effort to
 145 go off on your own and you can do it but its alot more effort
 146 LW: mhm
 147 DB: and you've gotta weigh that up when. if you decide to do that (1.0)
 148 LW: hhow can you. do you personally weigh up that decision? I mean are
 149 there tools that you use to determine (inaudible)
 150 DB: [[mhm(.) well I think you've got to start of with the formal er the
 151 formal approaches.what is the business case for this project
 152 LW: mhm
 153 DB: ehm what is the er risk analysis for it(1.0) erm (1.5) does the risk
 154 analysis demand that you have to take this. whatever course of action it is
 155 erm does. so are you being driven into it by er er a good structured analysis
 156 of what your project needs are er have you looked. make sure there's logical
 157 steps there (1.0) er. given that you have gotta good business case. that
 158 there is a good risk analysis and there does appear to be a solid case for
 159 doing this, whatever it is, buy a case tool for example. then I think you have
 160 to. then I think you have to say okay uhm the next thing you do now is say,
 161 Where is the centre? so you find out where the centre is and then you have
 162 to. if its different from where you want them to be er you then have to cost
 163 out what will be the implications of waiting for the centre er or not and so

- 164 you can imagine can't. you a sorta. almost a. sorta. almost a semi-formal er
 165 and a fairly structured approach to weighing those issues up erm (2.0)
 166 LW: mhm
 167 DW: and at the end of the day you also have to take into consideration. (1.0)
 168 I.lets imagine you come out to a decision. lets say you come out with the
 169 decision to say.yes it looks like we oughta. come out on our own because
 170 there is enough benefit in the time scale to actually go for it (1.0)
 171 LW: mhm
 172 DB: what you then have to decide is how much resources. how much will it
 173 cost us to actually go off on our own, how much time will we have to give
 174 to actually winning people over. ehm and indeed from the political angle, do
 175 we believe.you can believe you have a good business case for doing it, but
 176 you've gotta believe that you can. That its practical to win people over
 177 LW: mhm
 178 DB: that the people that are gonna sign the bills are gonna allow you to go
 179 off and do your own thing (1.0) erm so there's a sorta (0.5) a formal fairly
 180 sensible, logical sortof approach to it.
 181 LW: mhm
 182 DB: and then there's some (1.0) I think its sorta almost gut, gut risk analysis
 183 at the end to say well you know, okay but will the director sign this off. if I
 184 win those arguments will he still sign me off at the end of the day or will
 185 he be too nervous to do it?
 186 LW: [[So would you say then that much of your management day your able to
 187 be that reliant on some formal pattern?
 188 DB: erm (1.0) no I don't think it is I think that er (3.0) I think its a case of
 189 (.) er (1.0) we do. we try and work our way through those various issues and
 190 er. It doesn't feel like that (.) when you're working your way through
 191 because its. so much of it is chunked up into little bits
 192 LW:mhm
 193 DB: erm with a good sprinkling of serendipity in there. you know catching
 194 people in the lou and sortof finding other people sitting next to you in a
 195 canteen erm (1.0) and you you do various horse trading and then you get to a
 196 stage where you feel, okay we've gotta make a decision on this and that's
 197 where we tend to sit down and to map out (.) then okay lets map out, what
 198 have we got available?
 199 LW: yes
 200 DB: we normally find we're missing two or three bits, so we find we have to
 201 rush around and try and just gather those last two or three bits of
 202 information or decision or support (2.0) erm (2.0) so
 203 LW: [[its almost naturally organised

- 204 DB: yes yeah I think so mhm (.) I feel that er uhm (1.0) that we've got a
 205 reason a reasonable understanding of what we need to do to make to make
 206 these things happen (1.0) we we go through alot of frustration erm and we
 207 get you know we get quite angry with the obstacles that we get faced with
 208 (2.0) erm (1.0) but er (1.0) we do actually (1.0) work our way through them
 209 more often than not. but it just takes so much effort (there's nothing you
 210 know that causes more restraint)
- 211 LW: where does the clear sightedness seem to come from for you in your
 212 job?
- 213 DB: well that's a good question. erm I I well I don't feel(.) yeah (.) I suppose.
 214 well it doesn't feel like clear sightedness but I. if I suppose I was asking
 215 the question looking back on (3.0) One of the. One of the, just to go back a
 216 minute. One of the reasons why at the time it doesn't feel clear is the fact
 217 that there are so many other issues flapping around that constantly
 218 obscuring your view erm (1.0) I find for example that when I go off on a on a
 219 training course erm (2.0) that wha while I'm in the training course being
 220 taught something (.) great clarity will suddenly arrive er about an issue
 221 that I've left behind and I have to sought of keep a set of notes of a training
 222 course that are nothing to do with the course but actually you know great
 223 visitations of clarity the great artificial intelligence box that's working in
 224 here (points to his head) has absorbed things osmosis and suddenly its gone
 225 cck er ha to go to go back to your question where where does that come
 226 from (.)I think it comes from a couple of things first of all I've got a couple
 227 of people working for me here who are very experienced in the machinations
 228 of the IM system
- 229 LW: mhm
- 230 DB: I am not.erm. but I've got a couple of project managers who who've been
 231 here (1.0) fifteen years, and understand how the system works so that's a
 232 sortof. they understand the processes first of all. erm and secondly I think
 233 it also comes from coming to. I came from the Operation division er I
 234 haven't I've only been a year in IT (.) so erm (2.0) I don't necessarily I'm not
 235 necessarily bogged down with all the detail coz I don't understand it so
 236 that's been an advantage to me erm because it means I've come in and you
 237 only see the (.) big chunks coz you can't understand what they're talking
 238 about and that's been quite helpful erm and I think its a combination of
 239 experience and (.) overview that isn't cluttered
- 240 LW: mhm
- 241 DB: [[helps and I think there's a third element, and the third element is erm
 242 understanding yeah understanding what what. how you persuade people erm
 243 you know getting people involved you know all those good things about
 244 getting people involved, what's init for me what's init for them erm getting

245 them to find that commitment to it (.) erm and you've got to add that in coz
 246 you've gotta have the experience of the process you've gotta have some
 247 clarity about what needs to be done and then you've got to understand wh
 248 what is it about people that gets them to buy into your needs
 249 LW: mhm how do you achieve this? (4.0)
 250 DB: In operations a team helps but. but they're difficult to manage, to (.)
 251 their interests the (.) tech (0.5) they don't wanna be a team. buy into. to make
 252 them work together's not easy (2.0)
 253 LW: Is building a team around you important?
 254 DB: er yes I think so it's something about you judge your own effectiveness
 255 by how your management team is operating, how much team work do you see
 256 going on (.) erm (1.0) and that's I think the first, one of the first indicators
 257 is how quickly your initiatives are being acted on
 258 LW: mhm
 259 DB: properly not just you know (.)
 260 LW: mhm
 261 DB: and then thirdly er are you delivering what your business plan you know
 262 are you delivering what is required of you, so, but, you have to go through. if
 263 you find this. when I arrived here I didn't. I found that delivery of what was
 264 required was very very low (2.0) you know your arrival is not going to
 265 change things for a considerable amount of time (1.0) and so you have to
 266 look for other indicators to say are you on the right track (.)
 267 LW: mhm
 268 DB: and that's. that's things like er the management team work (1.0) the way
 269 the way that your initiatives are picked up on and worked on (.) and then the
 270 culture erm er every six weeks I have a session with all the staff and uhm
 271 (3.0) as the weeks have gone on those have been a good (2.0) weather
 272 vein to the way things are going and I. you know they're like straws in the
 273 wind kinda how how is the culture lying. what is it like round here (1.0) and
 274 I've I've been pleased because you see more participation, you see more
 275 people asking questions er and and questioning where are we going and
 276 what's happening and that's an encouraging sign (1.0)
 277 LW: So do you like to achieve your work through team work er find it a team
 278 value in er achieving your work?
 279 DB: First of all I do like to. uhm lets take a fairly. lets take erm a meeting
 280 with the customers once a month we meet with our customers erm we. our
 281 team meets with the customer team. so my customer general manager and a
 282 deputy general manager and their senior managers meet with myself and my
 283 project managers, its a very useful meeting for us (.) but erm we have to
 284 report on various er issues and items uhm so. first of all we've got to get we've gotta put on a table I've gotta
 285 put on the table to you uhm the normal

286 good business strategy er what's this meeting about er what needs to be
 287 prepared before hand and do we have a consensus whose gonna answer
 288 which questions are we. do we know what we're gonna say (1.0)
 289 LW: mhm
 290 DB: so you've gotta you've gotta do all that (1.0) uhm (cough) and you've
 291 gotta have that ready and that forms that forms the er er foundation for you
 292 to deploy your management, managerial skills
 293 LW: that almost pre-meeting is very important then?
 294 DB: [[almost a pre-meeting [absolutely. because if you go in there mhm you
 295 can be a damn fine manager but if you go in there without without
 296 preparation (.) you can end up with egg on your face. we. you you don't
 297 maximise your opportunity basically
 298 LW: mhm (2.0)
 299 DB: so uhm you uhm (1.0) you've gotta get that stuff sorted. so that stuff
 300 sorted out first (1.0) (cough) and then it starts then I think you start
 301 depending on on ehm your. if you like your managerial skill (.) the stuff you
 302 can't put in. put down to easily erm and if I try and go through that meeting
 303 and try and call out the things that trigger off ideas. First of all (.) I am
 304 trying to access where are. what what has happened to the
 305 customers in the last week, what's happened to them yesterday (3.0) what
 306 (.) how are they feeling at the moment (.) uhm (.) because er (1.0) depending
 307 on what the agenda of the meeting is going to be about erm er they can
 308 either take that one way or take it the other way and you do need to sorta
 309 be. you do need to know why are they under the hammer at the moment er is
 310 it about anything specific, is it about assuming. they're likely to erm feel is
 311 in your bag, have you thought ahead about that, so you should do a bit of
 312 thinking about that before the meeting but when you go in there you should
 313 make a judgement what is the atmosphere like here, who, what the key
 314 players, how the key players responding (1.0) are the key players there?
 315 LW: yeah
 316 DB: and then what you have to do I think is as they start (.) speaking once
 317 they start making contributions making judgements about you know is what
 318 I'm hearing now what I thought I was gonna hear so are, is what we've got
 319 here still okay
 320 LW: yeah, yes
 321 DB: or do I need to actually (1.0) change the (2.0) the wrap of the thing
 322 slightly because if they've asked you for a document (1.0) and you've
 323 prepared a document (1.0) you can get to a situation when you realise this
 324 document doesn't meet what they're actually now talking about but you may
 325 actually have to use it but perhaps you can put some verbal caveats er
 326 around it erm

- 327 LW: mhm
- 328 DB: and I think one of the important issues here is how you respond to
- 329 them (3.0) erm (2.0) quite honestly what drives senior managers is their
- 330 careers (2.0) and (3.0) although that is often mixed up with what's good for
- 331 the company right. you've gotta and you've gotta constantly think (2.0) what
- 332 does this mean for this guys career
- 333 LW: mhm
- 334 DB: how is this blokes boss gonna see this, coz that's what they're thinking
- 335 about and as performance management and pay is related more and more,
- 336 and more and more, you know you. if your providing IT system to people and
- 337 the're and you know they're measured on delivery of IT systems. yeah. They
- 338 see IT systems as a way of getting kudos and brownie points and all of
- 339 those words (.) then you've gotta be careful that that what may be a
- 340 perfectly logical and sensible situation will appear to be completely
- 341 you know wrong for that, because you'll basically be saying to him well for
- 342 these very sensible, logical reasons we're not gonna deliver this project
- 343 and what your telling him is that he's suddenly gonna loose, he may loose
- 344 alot of money through that
- 345 Lw: mhm
- 346 DB: so if I boil it down to the real .you know.
- 347 LW: [[yes
- 348 DB: and he doesn't see that. he is very bright guy (1.0) you know (.) and er
- 349 with you know qualifications coming out of his arms (.) but he will not see
- 350 that inna inna subjective, objective way
- 351 LW: yeah
- 352 DB:and in a in a sort. what you've gotta do is, you've gotta say well what
- 353 impact will this have on the customer and you can't just see it as a. and one
- 354 of things with IM is IT people round here they see this as a in a they're very
- 355 logical and you know logic is a god to them and we need that to build the
- 356 computer systems but it makes them very naive on occasions about handling
- 357 senior management (.) coz senior management aren't necessarily logical in
- 358 the way that they receive information (0.5)
- 359 LW: mhm
- 360 DB: and er I think that. that's something that's .er erm you know I think its
- 361 because. The other thing you may decide for example is that I've got this
- 362 piece of information, I want to pass to them, what is the best window? lets
- 363 not present this information now (3.0)
- 364 LW: yeap
- 365 DB: let us present this information at a different window of opportunity
- 366 (2.0) will this be. will this, will this message be blurred by all the other
- 367 stuff that we've got to tell them today ?

- 368 LW: mhm I see
- 369 DB: [[its timing, arena and media and even personality although you could
- 370 include personality in arena. so that's a meeting with customers .a meeting
- 371 with staff, for example we're trying to bring in activity measures here
- 372 which are not, you know, there's not alot of bonus in productivity measures
- 373 for the project managers they don't see this they see this as saying build
- 374 this club so I can hit you over the head with it erm so you've gotta problem.
- 375 you've gotta say okay erm how do you get that across? well what you do is
- 376 the first thing you've got to do is say that productivity measures are part
- 377 of your performance review if you wanna do well in your performance
- 378 review then get your productivity measures in, so you've gotta make
- 379 something for them, you've gotta actually paint the big picture and then ask
- 380 them to use their brain, because they've been hired for their brains so its
- 381 idiotic not to say to them hey guys lets apply your brains to this. how would
- 382 you when you paint the big picture and here you define a business need, how
- 383 do you solve this?
- 384 LW: is it solely for them or is there a positive benefit for the business?
- 385 DB:= Oh I think there's a positive benefit, its not, its not entirely to
- 386 motivate them to er where you're dealing with people who and I found this
- 387 a bit. hard coming here where you're dealing with people who may be naive
- 388 about business (.) because they haven't had business you know they haven't
- 389 been fronted up with the business very often that you may ask them to to
- 390 think about how they would solve the problem and they offer allot of naive
- 391 ideas, so I think the way to do this. what you don't do is go along to a
- 392 meeting cold and say hey guys think about this, you prepare the ground 'fore
- 393 hand so that. so that you look for people who are gonna support the issue
- 394 erm you look for champions within the population that you're influencing an
- 395 its no good finding a champion who isn't influential in the population (0.5)
- 396 LW: mhm
- 397 DB: so you spend a bit of time influencing these people finding out if they've
- 398 got the right ideas, do when you go to the meeting you already know whose
- 399 gonna be saying what if you've done your work so that at the end of the
- 400 meeting (.) the most successful result is that the team has agreed a course
- 401 of action which all of them 'av bought into (.)
- 402 LW:mhm
- 403 DB: and then the team feels good about the meeting, about itself and your
- 404 probably gonna to get a better result you got you got a much better chance
- 405 of getting a better result then if you said "well we've failed to agree so I'm
- 406 gonna tell you what to do" (.) You've gotta be prepared as happens to me
- 407 every week uhm that I have a view about issues er and then a what I

408 consider to be a better view er a more accurate analysis comes onto the
 409 table and so when I do the inclusion bit I genuinely believe that I'll getta
 410 better result 'coz there are people better at analysis an logic round the table.
 411 So I.er. I (1.0)
 412 LW: mhm
 413 DW: So I have a look at that stuff (.) it doesn't always happen so I'm trying
 414 to say that you've gotta be. you know its not a case of its this or this, its a
 415 case of they might be naive, they might not be naive they might be very
 416 good (.) ehm it might be er you might find tha a a war develops between two
 417 apparently equally equally balanced groups erm you may find that the
 418 person whose actually putting forward the view that you agree with is
 419 actually a non influential member of the group
 420 LW: mhm
 421 DB: ehm (1.0) and so you have to have er you have to have be prepared, you
 422 have to be very open (.) mentally to what is gonna happen and not think that
 423 its all gonna go to plan, because it invariably doesn't, (clears throat)
 424 you know there's invariably some little snag or difficulty (1.0)
 425 LW: are those snags or difficulties more apparent at senior level?
 426 DB: no I don't think they are I think if, for example when we have a meeting
 427 with the director (2.0) uhm (2.0) I'm. I see my project managers and team
 428 leaders quite often and I've done I've organised things like. we've been on an
 429 outward bound weekend and you know so you do and other kinds of events so
 430 that you get to know them as people, how they begin to operate
 431 DB : when you go up, my general manager for example I feel I. he lives there
 432 (points to next office area) so I feel that I know him (.) reasonably well
 433 now not as well as the project managers but I know. I generally feel I know
 434 where he's coming from (1.0) I think its, in this particular case its a uhm in
 435 this particular case its. but this doesn't always happen with the GM's ehm
 436 but in this particular case I feel I I feel I see eye to eye I'm lucky in the
 437 sense that I feel I feel I see I see the world (.) in a similar way
 438 LW:mhm
 439 DB:=to my GM, you can end up having a GM who you do not see the world in
 440 the same way and that's. that can be very difficult
 441 LW: what is it that makes you see the world in the same way?
 442 DB:= well two things really, very crudely its when he says to me you, look I
 443 think you should be doing this. its something you feel yes I should be doing
 444 this and visa versa when you say to him you've got this problem this is
 445 what I want to do, he says yeah that sounds right so its that. its that
 446 meshing together
 447 LW: yeah

448 DB: =and also its that erm its a a lot more subtle issues as well (.) about
 449 erm (4.0) the way that you would use humour in the meeting (1.0) the wway
 450 that er you would judge the time scales (2.0) er the you know progress (1.0)
 451 judged from here is very slow from here is very fast and there's a sort of
 452 whole arc of views where do you sit on the arc? (draws on a blank page)
 453 LW: mhm
 454 DB: the strange combination of personality and experience that that makes
 455 you make that judgement and erm you you find that you get some GM's who
 456 you know are are not seeing the world as you see it (1.0) and that's a great
 457 difficulty er and when you find a GM who sees the world as you see it then
 458 boy that's (.) that can be. providing he sees that's so, then that can be very
 459 you know very w. happy state of affairs, relatively
 460 LW: mhm
 461 DB: but when you go up to the director level (.) and I, its doesn't havve to be
 462 director but I think directors in particular (1.0) where they're operating up
 463 here on the mountain tops (1.0) (raises his arm to point up)and there is
 464 cloud between you and the mountain tops, so when you go up through the
 465 cloud, you're not sure what you're gonna find
 466 LW: mhm and how often do you do that?
 467 DB: [[and what? not. not, not too frequently erm I don't know once a month or
 468 so that invariably you're not in touch you're not in tune with the man and
 469 you haven't spent enough time with him to know (.) one. you don't know what
 470 his latest problems are (1.0) or what his latest pressure is and you find
 471 that there's more pressure. GM's get BCM's get pressurised. project
 472 managers get pressurised but as you can see GM'S get more preoccupied
 473 and pressurised than than. an directors do even more and don't react in a
 474 standard way (2.0)
 475 LW:mhm
 476 DB: so (.) you can walk in erm and you have to very quickly assess where the
 477 hell you are and that's much more difficult for a BCM to do with a director
 478 than it is with his GM
 479 LW: mhm why is this
 480 DB: [[I want to improve my managerial ability and at this stage. its alot to
 481 do with (.) erm your management style you know are you, being aware. its
 482 not so much (3.0) its a lot to do with that (3.0) and its also to do with erm
 483 the clarity. your clarity of analysis, what is important to you. focusing on
 484 what's important to you and the here and now
 485 LW: mhm
 486 DB: I think you can break it down into those three issues erm (3.0) for
 487 example I find that er erm (2.0) the meeting that erm the BCM's meeting the
 488 the Business Centre Managers have been chosen erm and tend to have some

489 similarity in there type compared to er a tend to when they get together
 490 they tend to be like a great flock of seagulls you know (chchchch) er and its
 491 not suprising they've been chosen for a certain type of job, looking at a
 492 certain type of job spec and they have a lot of things in common so that
 493 Rods meetings with his BCM's tends to be different to my meeting with
 494 project managers coz they are a different group
 495 LW: mhm, yeah
 496 DB: and ehm also he is a different manager so erm (4.0) there's a different
 497 dynamic going on er uhm (3.0) and also erm (4.0) my project managers are
 498 are almost entirely controlled(.) if you like they see their creature through
 499 me uhm because their relationship with the customer is isn't strong enough
 500 for them to find em their careers through another path generally. With the
 501 BCM's erm you have examples where the BCM for engineering erm, has gotta
 502 strong relationship to the engineering director er so he doesn't necessarily
 503 see Rod as the only route to further his career. that makes it very difficult
 504 you know for that relationship (.) the individual may be concerned to deliver
 505 to a different manager (2.0)
 506 LW: That's interesting how people er see their careers er reporting
 507 DB: [[well absolutely. absolutely I think that's fascinating. I mean how erm
 508 and this raises an interesting point about delivery. There's a major issue in
 509 IM about delivery
 510 LW: physical delivery?
 511 DB: physical delivery of projects, for example er I came here knowing (.)
 512 knowing nothing about uhm IT so for the first three months I was you know
 513 focused on trying to learn about IT and about you know about what what was
 514 this job all about but then I found that erm that there was very little done
 515 very little work had been done here on er management development so I got
 516 involved in some initiatives on the management development, nothing to do,
 517 this is across IM across the business centres so this is nothing to do with
 518 my delivery (1.0) so I came in didn't know anything about this job and
 519 within a couple of months I was sorta saying hey well its, we oughta be
 520 doing these things folks forgetting all about this here, well you know (1.0) er
 521 (1.0) but that was okay because I felt that was sorta, if you like, I was,
 522 that was a contribution I was making to the overall team, because I'd been
 523 through a lot of that in GOAL that was my contribution erm and I was
 524 using that to establish networks amongst the BCM's so they would help me
 525 .when I said look what do I do when I need to tackle this sorta thing but
 526 then my General Manager said erm we want you to chair the DP panel which
 527 is a sorta meeting of staff- union reps and management every quarter but
 528 although its every quarter there's alot of work in between, now that's
 529 something I'd done alot of in Ground Op's London (2.0) and I came here (.) to

530 to broaden my career and pick up all of this new stuff and so said no I
 531 wouldn't do it uhm then he came back two weeks later and said you've gotta
 532 do it so (.) you know here I am trying to learn about IT and I I've voluntarily
 533 expanded my horizon to management development because I felt I wanted to
 534 make a contribution (2.0) and then I've suddenly got some work I've been
 535 doing previously I didn't really want to do which is really you know so I'm
 536 now stretched that wide (opens arms) and now because of that I've now
 537 picked up another chunk which is the DP uhm work group and that's been
 538 forced but this is where I'm supposed to be doing my job, running the
 539 business centre now this is where my customers focus is (2.0) my
 540 customers couldn't give a tupenny toss about this lot they're not interested
 541 in that. right? so that's where I. now are you in good performance ratings
 542 for this will it contributes to my individual performance ratings but some
 543 people some project managers will stay within these bounds for example
 544 the engineering guy, I I've got a business centre of sixty the engineering guys
 545 got a centre of 100
 546 LW: mhm
 547 DB: right now he fights very hard and only has. he fights very hard and he
 548 has virtually nonadditional work, he's got a very demanding business centre
 549 very demanding customers but he has chosen and I think even if he had a
 550 smaller business centre he'd still only have that little bit and now he
 551 actually is regarded as a damn good business centre manager (.) and one of
 552 the questions I'm asking is (2.0) you know I'm I'm beginning. getting
 553 concerned that my standard of where I am is different from that of the
 554 business centre that delivery at the end of the day is all that matters.
 555 other little issues are. should. come up, you know should you be dealing
 556 with this information or should it be coming up from below.

- 1 LW: Could you go back over what your job is (0.5) more in terms of what
- 2 you consider to be er criteria for effectiveness. (2.0)
- 3 A.C: Right (4.0)
- 4 AC: Okay. We'll move along quickly. if I just (2.0) I already had something
- 5 here that I wanted to go over with my boss that was basically was uhm
- 6 (0.5) what I spend my time on.
- 7 LW: mmh
- 8 AC: which is what your looking for (1.0)
- 9 LW: yes
- 10 AC: an::::d I can't find it(1.0) what's more
- 11 LW: was it something you've, a document you've generated?
- 12 AC: [[here it is [[yeah (1.0) okay (1.0) good (1.0) so (2.0) alright I break
- 13 (clears throat) I break it down into day to day management, project
- 14 management (2.5) business strategy(1.0) and systems development (1.0)
- 15 LW: mmh
- 16 AC= that's generally(0.5) what. the types of things I'm involved in uhm. my
- 17 day to day management inclu::des looking at the production, the service.
- 18 making sure that the status of (0.5) all the various departments is
- 19 acceptable. we make, we have customer standards that have to be met (.)
- 20 and I review the standards and make sure that we're meeting them and
- 21 where we're not meeting them get people to (0.5) to give me up dates as
- 22 to what is the plan to get it going and I'll have input to that plan if I think
- 23 the plan is weak(.) or I'll just approve the plan and tell them that looks
- 24 reasonable (.) and the time frames as to when we should get the problems
- 25 fixed.
- 26 LW: mmh (0.5) of those areas that you've listed how are they going to look
- 27 if somebody was to shadow you for a couple of days?
- 28 AC: If someone was shadowing me for a couple of days they'd see me spend 10%
- 29 of my time on (0.5) how would that look, whata you mean?
- 30 LW well you talked about business strategy and you're involvement is that
- 31 largely through meetings* or?
- 32 AC: [[Right.Okay.production issues and backlog monitoring they'd see me
- 33 just reading stuff at my desk. This. (looks at papers on desk) A pile like
- 34 this comes in about 5 times a day so I read about a foot of paper almost
- 35 everyday trying to go through status of everything that's goin on uhm (0.5)
- 36 so that would be meeting and setting up meeting if there's a problem to
- 37 get the people that are accountable for that problem to to do something.
- 38 Uhmm (0.5) team work co-ordination that's just counselling my staff(.)
- 39 making them work together so again that may be meetings ehr might be on
- 40 the phone (0.5) might be something (0.5) monitering products and control

41 issues again that's reading the documents here an then setting up
 42 one to one conferences with my managers (0.5) ensuring, so alot of its follow up.
 43 LW: [[yeah
 44 AC: = On things that have already been initiated (.) human resource issues,
 45 anything that might come up (looks at a paper on his desk) in this case its
 46 salary planning uhm (0.5) there may be a problem with a staff member
 47 that somebody wants to talk to me about (.)so that's counselling (1.0)
 48 LW: right
 49 AC: okay. technical assistance (.) there may be a specific technical
 50 problem outside(.) we can't sell a trade(.) There's a broker in Japan who has
 51 a problem (1.0) any kind of ehm (0.5) uhm knowledgeable G***** C*****
 52 assistance(.)they may come into my office they being my managers or even
 53 their managers or a supervisor may come in and say. can you help me work
 54 out (clicks tongue) this problem or can you handle this customer for me.
 55 LW: =mmh
 56 AC: =and then there might be some other things. other things that I do, but
 57 that's very much it. The mainathing ina mya job, on a day to day basis, is
 58 follow up (6.0) I'm very concerned that my staff is okay, that the morale
 59 remains high, that the direction that's been set has been communicated
 60 very clearly (.) 'n that projects that I've set out to them and am looking
 61 for end results. I follow up on a day to day basis and see what the status
 62 is(.) not everyday on the same projects but at least once a week on the
 63 projects to see what's happening, what progress have we made in the last
 64 week coz no ones expected to be st(.) to be in the same spot this week as
 65 they were last week.
 66 LW: mmh
 67 AC: so its a follow up
 68 LW: okay
 69 AC: its an enormous follow up after the direction has been set
 70 LW: =and the directions set above you?
 71 AC: (1.0) uhm depends
 72 LW: [[or with your input? (2.0)
 73 AC: I'm given very general directions (1.0) so for instance I'll (1.0) get
 74 direction. Someone will want to grow capacity . the business plan the
 75 overall business plan will be, that they're taking on more clients so
 76 therefor:e we have to have to have more processing power. I'll just be told
 77 how many clients are being taken on and its up to me to figure out
 78 LW: [[mhmm to translate
 79 AC: [[the service . Okay uhm (0.5) project management . There are specific
 80 projects going on here that I monitor on a weekly, bi weekly basis but I've
 81 allocated specific responsibility for those projects out to my managers

82 and I have discussions with them frequently.

83 LW: [[mmh

84 AC: [[so again my job is just an enormous set of meetings (1.0)

85 LW: =mmh

86 AC: all day (2.0)

87 LW: what made you draw up that document(1.0) was it an interest in

88 sortof?

89 AC:[[it.well I would like to find my replacement(1.0) I would like to find

90 somebody out. in order for me to progress and go up the ladder I need

91 somebody to sit here(.) so we're in the process of looking around for

92 suitable candidates and jus (.) this is a road map of the type of individual

93 when somebody says what's the job about they can get a feel for what the

94 job, for what they'll be doing.

95 LW: would it be possible for me to take a copy?

96 AC: mmh (1.0) okay (0.5) I I(.) now for instance I can cross out my bosses

97 name and my name and what not and just say "as guidance to find the right

98 person as my replacement I thought the following general job description

99 might be helpful"(.) day to day management, production issues and backlog

100 monitoring, team work co-ordination (deletes names from the memo)

101 in.now continue to establish when we're talking to somebody 'n how do you

102 establish it? (.) that's an Organisation, you read up, you you decide wh

103 what steps have to be taken, what plan has to be put in place to establish

104 a program(.) but once its established its realla matter of monitoring.

105 LW: mmh

106 AC so my whole function is establish direction, communicate the

107 direction and follow up that the directions being followed. end of story . I

108 do nothing else for a living (1.0)

109 LW: but is that not(.) is the establishment process not something that is

110 ongoing?

111 AC: mhm(2.0) as the need arises. I don't make up things to establish. right?

112 LW: =right so hhow do you recognise the need?

113 AC: okay that's from the business plan that's why this this business

114 strategy comes up, (AC crosses out a line of the document) this one (.) I

115 will just cross out because that's a specific project for me

116 LW:=mhmm

117 AC: [[Okay

118 AC: again the projects are specific but the whole the the sequence

119 underneath the projects the same, monitor progress, monitor

120 performance, monitor growth (.) right (.) the system establishment,

121 monitor progress, monitor progress monitor progress and identify risk. So

122 what I'll do I'll just put (.) project number one.and I'll just put these bullet

- 123 points down as wh what it takes to to establish or monitor what when
 124 somebody says project management what are they talking about
 125 LW: right I was just about to say well what about definitions ? (2.0)
 126 AC: Okay well continue to establish that's, I mean that's the only one that
 127 would be tough to to uhm that would be tough to identify monitor progress
 128 and monitor results and monitor growth is a tracking process.
 129 LW: yes
 130 AC: right
 131 LW: data that is generated by the systems you've got
 132 AC: [[and that's. Absolutely. so you just monitor it and when its too low
 133 according to your business plan you give it a boost and if its going to fast
 134 and looks like its going out of control you slow it down and you react off
 135 that monitoring process. (in breath) Right. uhm (1.0) business strategy and
 136 that's where these come in. (points to memo) that's where the projects
 137 come from. unit cost maintenance, control our unit cost out here an make
 138 sure our unit cost is staying at an acceptable level (.)budget review make
 139 sure we're not spending more money than we've actually budgeted (.)
 140 capacity planning which makes sure we have enough processing power to
 141 get things going and new business review(.) review the new business that's
 142 coming in to make sure these other things aren't blown up
 143 LW: th the difference between somebody being effective in the position
 144 means the way in which they handle the temporal order?
 145 AC: [[I would think
 146 LW: [[way in which they prioritise?
 147 AC: = yes, they're actually in the priority order, so my number one priority
 148 is my day to day management. Right?
 149 LW: =mmhm
 150 AC: = my number two priority is my project management. right? my
 151 number three is my business strategy management, my number four is my
 152 business systems development management. but this has not taken consi.
 153 into the case setting the business strategy itself, this assumes(.)and this
 154 is the biggest assumption on this(.)whole memo is that the business
 155 strategy has been set by senior management and has been communicated
 156 clearly to me and I will now run my piece which. my piece is service
 157 delivery so its the biggest piece of the business strategy
 158 LW: right
 159 AC: So, I as a team member of Senior management, sit down, we set the
 160 business strategy. and the business strategy will be, we wanna increase
 161 uhm we wanna increase Profit by 25% from 1985 to 1980 I'm sorry from
 162 1988(.) to 1989. Right?
 163 LW: Yeah

164 AC: Now that's the first assumption so you say to yourself so okay is there
 165 a basis for that an you say well in order to do that we have to either
 166 maintain expenses at zero (1.0) and increase our revenue line by 25% is
 167 that doable? Now. we say okay, uhm do we have a capacity and this goes on
 168 and we start asking all these questions. Do we have enough capacity right
 169 now to increase volumes by 20% yeah? Great will the 25%. will the 20%
 170 increase volume increase increase revenue by 20% ?

171 LW: mmh

172 AC: If the answers 'yes' we're just looking for another 5% so lets increase
 173 expense by 10% and revenues by 30% and come up with our profit of 25%.

174 LW: So I ehk the 25% comes from the States does it? that's the target they

175 AC: [[yes [[because what they set. they set one indicator that must be met
 176 what return, excuse me, what return do we want. last year we had a return
 177 of 25% right? so for every pound we spent we got back a pound 25.

178 LW:=mhhm

179 AC:=good deal, much better than a checking in account. great business(.)
 180 any business. generally in banking if you can reach a(0.5) 15 or 16 percent
 181 return you've done well. if you can reach a 20 percent return you've done
 182 very well if you can reach 25 and over you have an excellent business.

183 LW: mmhm

184 AC: So this year they've said okay last year we did a 25% return next year
 185 we want a 32 % return (0.5)

186 LW: (inaudible)

187 AC:[[okay which a 32% return on top of a 25 % return (0.5) i::s 7% points on
 188 25 is almost that 25. is(.) is higher than 25 is likea 30% increase in profit

189 LW: (0.5) mmhm

190 AC: Okay. all, all this goes on. all this planning goes on from (.)July to
 191 December

192 LW: mmhm

193 AC: for the following year(1.0) but is solidified in November and
 194 December. so last November and December they said okay. I think we can
 195 go to 32% profitability.return on expenses. lets get there (.) away we go.

196 LW: mhm

197 AC:= so I come up and say okay the first thing I want to know is how much
 198 volume is gonna increase for me to process. what service do I have to
 199 deliver

200 LW: mhm

201 AC: that's identified to me by the marketing people

202 LW: mhm

203 AC: [[right.so I'm involved in the business plan

204 LW:=mhm

205 AC:=but only for really a solid one month or two months and its on and off
 206 cause we do it through memos and things like that (in breath) but if
 207 someone was working with me they would only see that (1.0) in a few
 208 memos (0.5)and two trips to New York in November and December(1.0) end
 209 of story . now. my boss probably spends 50% of her time (1.0) worrying
 210 about making sure that that plan is realistic
 211 LW:= mhm
 212 AC: =because I'm only one part .the service delivery. You've gotta do the
 213 systems delivery. you've gotta do the marketing plan, you've gotta do the
 214 sales plan. all of that so they're doing planning. getting the business
 215 forward. product development all of that is done at one level
 216 LW:=mhm
 217 AC: I deliver one piece of that (.) the service
 218 LW:so if you see that end goal as unrealistic what kina feedback can y give
 219 AC: I say it cannot be done. I say we can't do that. In order for me to meet
 220 that I need a sixteen percent increase in expenses and here's how its
 221 broken down because I have to be quantitative all the time, so I say and
 222 that's what I did say I need sixteen percent more expenses which totalled
 223 another (in breath) about another million pounds a year (1.0) to do what
 224 they wanted me to do to meet the revenue restraint. they said you've got it
 225 (.) you are authorised to increase by sixteen percent, but you have to
 226 deliver that sixteen percent increase in expense to you, is gonna deliver
 227 thirty percent increase in revenue. sounds good, we love it, business plan
 228 done, here's your budget (.)
 229 LW: mhm
 230 AC: once I have my budget (1.0) they say okay now within that budget we
 231 want you to deliver capacity, quality service (.) right
 232 LW: mhm
 233 AC: now within that budget so. now I go back and that's where the projects
 234 come in. capacity. right. that's this (3.0) (points to paper) capacity
 235 planning, business strategy, capacity planning, project review (.) unit
 236 cost maintenance which means if you meet your capacity underneath those
 237 expenses you'll come within that unit cost.
 238 LW: right
 239 AC: and new business to make sure that what the marketing people said
 240 was coming in is in fact coming in at that level not any more or not any
 241 less. so all those constraints we're agreed on as a team now want
 242 monitoring making sure that I'm okay. right? but they also say we'd also
 243 like to enhance our product we'd like you to set up in Luxemburg and we
 244 want you to do all that with a quality service. Luxemburg came up in

245 January actually it came up in December after the processing was done,
246 we agreed as a management team to go ahead and set up Luxemburg and
247 we'd worry about the money later.

248 LW: will that affect how your effectiveness is reviewed?

249 AC: yeah that'll be recognised as exceeding objectives because the
250 objectives didn't include Luxemburg. The fourth thing we look at again
251 according to our business plan is I need these systems otherwise if I don't
252 get these systems I probably need a fifty percent increase in expenditure
253 and we're in big trouble. so give me these systems. so I design the
254 systems, implement. I help input the design of systems and the staff
255 implement the systems I follow up on making sure that they're in and
256 they're doing the right things and they're workan (1.0)

257 AC: so basically I mean that's kinda a map of what I do so its not. that's a
258 lot of words around that map

259 LW: yes

260 AC:= but its not as clear just on the sight of it, but what it comes down to
261 is setting a plan at a senior management level, communicating the pieces
262 of that plan that individuals are responsible for. because at the end of the
263 day the most effective management tool that anybody has is making one
264 individual accountable for a clear set of things that that individual agrees
265 to be accountable for. that is the trick to management. If you can get
266 people say I agree that I am accountable to deliver X,Y,Z that'll be
267 delivered or that person will have failed in those objectives

268 LW: mhm

269 AC: and that's all all people ask for. they ask for clarity and and an average
270 chance (.) to succeed. and that's what this is all about. I wouldn't be able to
271 map out this day, my day would be a total confusion I wouldn't know what
272 I was doing if I didn't. If I wasn't aiming at an end result. but I'm aiming at
273 a very clear end result coz I getta very clear direction from New York(.)

274 LW: Are there any bits you've missed out well not left out but had to (.)
275 because of the nature of the audience you're writing for?

276 AC: (3.0) no. because th the categories are very general. I mean they're very
277 general my boss knows what they're talking about but she just uses it as a
278 discussion document as we are using it now.as a discussion document.
279 I I have to do this because this is my management style. This is my day to
280 day management style. This just says moniter th just keep monitering
281 make sure its going okay, set direction, coordinate, get the team to work
282 together, make sure the human resources things are okay. These are all
283 people orientated, every one of these because my business is a people
284 business, we are a service business so people come first. Erm that's just
285 my day and you know fitting in there is er this stuff (1.0)

286 LW: When I came last time you had nine direct reports
 287 AC: = now I have five, I've done with four major what I've done I've done
 288 I've changed my organisation to increase my effectiveness I've changed
 289 three of the people who used to report to me (1.0) they now report to
 290 somebody else with what we call a functional report to me so I just
 291 oversee what they do and have input to what their areas do but I don't
 292 manage them on a day to day basis and I'm not responsible for them on a
 293 day to day basis and I touch base with them once every two weeks make
 294 sure that they're okay, that their direction is se. then, so I'm now down.
 295 that was three. one of them I just got rid of totally and cut my ties
 296 because it didn't make sense that I managed that piece and that went over
 297 to somebody else and then the five that are left. one of them is training,
 298 so that's just the general direction with the training officer running of
 299 with the training and I follow up on that to make sure the direction is
 300 going okay and that our training needs are being met once or twice a
 301 month. Just make sure the training needs are fairly on line with the
 302 direction that I've set for training. All of my direct reports run something
 303 that I feel is the most important, so Training is a full sector that I say is
 304 most is most important to keep the area running properly
 305 LW: mhm
 306 AC: then my other direct report is transaction processing, the production
 307 area, the service delivery area and he's probably. he has the biggest area
 308 about 120 people that process the transactions through . and then another
 309 area is the agent management and vending management, anybody that we
 310 contract out. to banks that do things for us in order to enhance the overall
 311 service. One specific manager has a big division monitoring those agents
 312 LW: so that's really the. your external network?
 313 AC: right. external networks one accountable person, so if I have a problem
 314 with an external vendor I go to one individual and say just what is wrong
 315 and why has that gone wrong or if its good I go to one individual and he
 316 gets a reward.
 317 LW: it would seem in your position you could have alot of external
 318 networks so in effect is he a gatekeeper?
 319 AC [[that's right (1.5) No he's a manager of those contacts just like my
 320 customers manage me (1.0) right they tell me what their needs are an I
 321 make sure I deliver on time or they don't use me that's what his job is and
 322 he has a very big processing unit which supports the transaction very well
 323 it supports it but it depends on the service of the agents so he runs that
 324 so its its a processing area but its totally dependent on the agents
 325 performance. I only get the bits that are bad, all the bits that are good,
 326 that's his job. I mean. right There's a fair amount of channelling the service

327 delivery information up to my boss it has to be channelled through me.
 328 right. Now uhm saying that there is a management information department
 329 that gives me an all of my statistics do not come from my managers it
 330 comes from independent group that does all of the information gathering
 331 so he wouldn't be able to hide anything from me. If somebody is not
 332 performing and he's not telling me I'll find out from the reports
 333 LW: mhm to em that's an unusual role to establish a manager for the
 334 external network
 335 AC: right. the reason for it. I was just gonna say, the effectiveness is
 336 clear we can't. we depend. our end service totally depends on our agents
 337 servicing us properly (.)
 338 LW: mhm
 339 AC: I can't afford to tell my clients I did everything right buta I gota my
 340 agent messing it up which is why you didn't get what you want I just can't
 341 tell my client that (.) as far as my client is concerned he doesn't care I
 342 blew it even though everything feels perfect. so that individual now is
 343 totally accountable for making sure that the agents never blow. I don't
 344 care what techniques he uses just make sure that the agent gives us 100
 345 % perfect service so we can service our clients 100 % of the time. If I
 346 don't have an individual responsible for co-ordinating the agent activities
 347 then I have to do it and I don'ta have time to co-ordinate the agent
 348 activities individually plus co-ordinate all these other things that I have
 349 to do. So I have to give it to one person whose full time job is to do that
 350 LW: that's interesting as no other manager that I've spoken to has had that
 351 role or has had the Organisational structure around him to do that
 352 AC:= right well you have to develop it otherwise you have too many things
 353 to follow up on yourself. I believe very heavily in the fact that my
 354 managers (.) anything that I give my managers responsibility for and
 355 accountability for er:ra things that I'm responsible for at a more senior
 356 level(.) but I can't do. I just don't have the time of day to spend day to day
 357 management on. I can monitor I can definitely monitor but I cannot force
 358 change on my agents I don't have the time (1.0) he can force change on the
 359 agents because he can fly to Italy if we have a problem in Italy eh just
 360 goes his job is fix Italy (.) if you have to send staff out to Italy to fix it.
 361 he's got eighty people send them out there, get it fixed because Italy is
 362 not performing right, Spain, Argentina wherever he has to send them they
 363 go and he fixes it. I don't have te. that's a full time job. So that's another
 364 direct report. Another direct report erm is client(.) is what we call client
 365 liaison erm which other business's would call customer service, its the
 366 customer contact, its the relationship managers, the account managers of
 367 which There's about eighty men in his group that just service the client,

368 take all these enquires fix any of them up, the reason for that is we have
 369 one group who does all that tied in to the transaction processing manager
 370 and the agent manager and they're all part of the same team but they're
 371 only concern is that if the client then has a problem or a question answer
 372 it and you don't have to drop anything else whereas other industries they
 373 have the transaction people drop what they're doing anna answer the
 374 question, eventually you get more questions than you can handle, your
 375 transaction doesn't work and then that piles up and you get more questions
 376 and you're giving all your time to questioning and its a cycle you can't
 377 break. In our Organisation the transaction people don't get asked any
 378 questions its a not their job, nota that transaction processing managers
 379 job. the service delivery managers job is that he has to deliver customer
 380 standards 100% of the time in a 100% error free environment and change
 381 what the customers want him to change, now he didn't get asked any
 382 questions he gets told from the client liaison group how he's doing they
 383 collate all the customers questions they come up with generic issues feed
 384 back errors into the processing area and the processing area says, okay
 385 I'm doing good here not so good over here and they set action plans to fix
 386 them so its very co-ordinated

387 LW: yes, so how do you cope with ensuring that they interact. the direct
 388 reports interact?

389 AC: =right. that's where this 25% of my time team co-ordination from my
 390 group comes in place (1.0) (AC points to the document) I run (2.0) its not
 391 easy its one of the most difficult things because you can imagine as you
 392 get more senior in the corporation then you tend to get turf issues and
 393 power issues and they wanna get ahead and some of them want my job and
 394 you have to create a team spirit an make em believe they're all working
 395 together so I've actually, uhm I've actually employed team work experts to
 396 come in and take us away periodically in a group and work together as a
 397 team on non banking things

398 LW: mhm

399 AC:=build a bridge across a river or something like that. really get into
 400 what it takes to trust each other, that's what it comes down to, you have
 401 to trust each other, once I establish their trust with each other and getem
 402 and gettem to trust each other in business its a little bit easier. I also tell
 403 em that if one of them comes to me and says I have an issue with manager
 404 so and so I just look at them and say if you're expecting me to help with
 405 that issue and you haven't talked to manager so and so yet then the whole
 406 issue is your problem and its your fault (.) first you go talk to him
 407 whether you socialise with that person is neither here nor there, you're
 408 business partners, you go talk to him and you let me know when you've

409 worked it out, tell me what the issue is and what the solution is, and they
 410 quickly start to learn that their performance has been negatively
 411 effective by coming to me and asking me to fix their internal problems
 412 between each other, that's not my job, they're grown people they should be
 413 able to communicate to each other, and come up with a business solution
 414 that helps the business not is individually helping one or the other. that
 415 they made a business solution. It comes back to giving them the direction
 416 that I've been given, that's our end goal.

417 LW: mhm

418 AC:= so once they understand the end goal working together as a team
 419 working towards that end goal is easy and they only have the odd occasion
 420 where I have to mediate because its not clear as to what's the best result,
 421 so what is the 25% of my time doing? its getting together, meeting with
 422 them together, getting discussions going someone has a problem fine what
 423 is your problem, come on, open up, lets go, lets talk a little, counselling
 424 once in a while I feel uncomfortable, they don't feel like a good team
 425 player, coaching all of that its all part of the team process

426 LW: so if someone else comes into your position is the team gonna perform
 427 effectively still?

428 AC: that's the big question, that's the big question, the team requires a
 429 coach. no matter how good the team is. I believe if I'm not replaced my
 430 team will function with the thought of my philosophy probably for the
 431 next four months with no sweat

432 LW:[[mhm

433 AC: and then it will start to spread apart(.) because just as countries need
 434 leaders teams need coaches or managersits human nature and whether
 435 that leaders only function is to be. give to the team that's a critical
 436 enough function, but the glue to the team is keep the team together let
 437 them trust each other talk out differences, follow up on direction make
 438 sure things are consistent, look at the big picture. look at the whole. If its
 439 a whole team make sure its. that's my management job"

440 LW: yeah and have you had to manage the team in the sorta sense of having
 441 to prioritise particular peoples needs at one time

442 AC: I give my indication as to what I think the priorities are and then
 443 again through my follow up process I find out if those priorities are being
 444 handled and if they're not I communicate with them, but many times I just
 445 (1.0) give an end result that I want. many times I say look you know, for
 446 instance we're gonna set up in Luxembourg processing transactions about
 447 the middle of February (2.0) that's all I'll say

448 LW:=mhm

449 AC: = how they set it up, how many people they need, how its done,
 450 packages, expatriates whatever (2.0) just give me the plan
 451 LW: so your not really giving each person an agenda you're giving the team
 452 an agenda
 453 AC: that's right. For instance the quality service that's a true team effort
 454 that's where it all came in. we are in the business of delivering a service
 455 to our clients which is the number one in the industry, and really that
 456 means that quality, service in a nut shell is completely meeting customer
 457 expectations and in order to do that each one of those managers has to
 458 function independantly and support each other so take care of their piece
 459 but make sure they support each other 100% of the time on the
 460 deliverables so if Mr Agent has agents falling down and transaction
 461 processing is perfect both Mr Transaction processing and Mr Agent have
 462 failed because the customer hasn't gotten what they want
 463 LW: mhm
 464 AC: and they understand that so Mr Transaction Processing may say look
 465 we're having a pretty easy time I've a couple of extra people here Mr Agent
 466 take them for the next three or four months they'll help you out Okay
 467 thanks. great and we'll get this thing delivered. we'll get it fixed and they
 468 work together
 469 LW: mhm, you mentioned that team building was a major problem, can you
 470 think of any other problems or challenges you've faced?
 471 AC: yeah I think that as you're. There's nothing any bigger than tryin to
 472 build people up into a team when they're not used to working as a team (.)
 473 that's probably the biggest problem that we faced at one point because
 474 communications down then, because it gets in the way of proper
 475 communication through all channels which is the same communication to
 476 everybody at the same time
 477 LW:mhm
 478 AC: =uhm and you can only really do that through a megaphone and even
 479 then people just aren't listening to the words that are coming out of it so
 480 that that is an important factor (.) uhm the other issue is that that we're
 481 tough ehm getting people to think as a business looking at this as a
 482 business as appose to just a job in an operations area looking at it by
 483 saying understanding why decisions are being made not just decisions
 484 have been made and how to reach them. so if I cut somebodies budget
 485 you know and don't give him as much money as they said they wanned.
 486 There's a reason behind it and it all comes down to the profitability we're
 487 all trying to meet and if they can understand how it maps in they accept
 488 the decision much better.
 489 LW: mhm

490 AC: they've started to think strategically, business wise as appose to as a
 491 functional person (0.5)
 492 LW: and have both those taken almost two years to
 493 AC: [[eighteen months but after a year it was coming very clear to them
 494 AC: they were patient they knew it would take at least a year (1.0) mhm
 495 LW: If I could change the subject a little is there anything common to the
 496 way you prioritise?
 497 AC: er yes there is actually customer need becomes my number one
 498 priority so if a customer complaint comes in and the customer is heated
 499 that's a very reactionary type of thing that becomes a number one priority,
 500 it affects now. so some of the reactionary daily stuff has to be fixed now.
 501 A production problem which if we don't fix it now we can't run end of day
 502 tonight therefore none of our transactions will be processed is a priority
 503 now drop what you're doing and fix it. Very rarely on a daily basis do I
 504 inarrupt my schedule from something that I got today. That very rarely
 505 happens.
 506 LW: mmh
 507 AC: because it is pretty easy to plan out a few days in advance what has to
 508 be done?
 509 LW: is that because you've a good team?
 510 AC: yes, and its because we're servicing the clients at a relatively good
 511 level that I don't get calls everyday saying this must be fixed today so one
 512 is the customer level, two is risk if something is is creating a bigger risk
 513 than the bank wants to take that's a high priority that's fixed now. So
 514 you've got service levels with customers, you've got risk. The third thing
 515 is if There's an enhancement to our service which has to be delivered by a
 516 date it becomes a relatively high priority somewhere before that date.
 517 LW:yeah
 518 AC: right (1.0)
 519 LW: Are there any times where perhaps you're own career or perhaps
 520 concerns within your division conflicts with the business objective?
 521 AC: =erm sometimes but very rare I mean I could tell you one thing that's
 522 always been a priority for me has been if any of my direct reports or their
 523 direct reports that's two managers down have a problem that they want to
 524 talk to me about I drop anything I'm doing and I go talk to them (.) it may
 525 take me an hour or two but I will talk to them that day to find out what
 526 there problem is
 527 LW: =mhmh so
 528 AC: =so people problems many times become my number one so even if I'm
 529 in the middle of fixing a customer problem I'll even drop that if one of my

530 managers comes in and says look I really gotta problem its urgent can you
 531 help me . sch .stop ..Thata just my style (1.0)

532 AC: I set the objectives based on a business plan for instance I'll set
 533 objectives I'll handle. now I'll hand these down to my staff coz each one of
 534 these has a manager responsible these are mine as a group. what my boss
 535 says is heres my objectives what I'd like to see is your area come into
 536 play please fill in the dates as to when you think you can get it done. so I
 537 do that and I incorporate those. plus these which I say I also have to do
 538 like the quality improvement programme which I'm running, expense
 539 control, establish the master trust business these are things that are
 540 more specific to me which she included under meet the business plan
 541 which is just too vague. erm. I then break it down into very individual
 542 quantitative objectives with dates to my managers and I give my
 543 managers these with dates now those dates are negotiable and then they
 544 add on top off that more objectives to their staff so they can meet this
 545 level of objectives so I can meet my bosses objectives.so each person
 546 knows exactly what he's tto do and it all roles up as this huge team its all
 547 part of just communicating very clearly and making people accountable
 548 for objectives and monitering them on a quarterly basis. (0.5) If problems
 549 arise witha project maka decision as to whether its acceptable to delay
 550 ifits a project you can't delay then you bring in new resources and delay
 551 another project, its a moving target all the time you prioritise projects.
 552 The objective is still met, so. which means that if that objective isn't
 553 met they've missed that objective, they're not going to get fired, but its
 554 just that they've missed that objective maybe we'll reschedule it for next
 555 year but they won't get the same pay rise(.) that they will get if they met
 556 all their objectives coz we base our pay scales on performance.

557 LW: so just the timing of the process changes?

558 AC: yeah or quite possibility the business strategy is changed and that
 559 objective is irrelevant(2.0) your lucky though, you picked the right one not
 560 to do. We do periodically revise the dates if we find out they're not going
 561 to be met. as the business evolves and as the year evolves you have to be
 562 in a position to change those dates somewhere along the line one of them
 563 will become more important than the other one and visa versa.

564 AC: inevitably things don't go smooth or according to plan all the time. of
 565 the ten objectives three of them quite possibly break at the same time so
 566 seventy percent of your objectives have been met on time your doing very
 567 well in any standard seventy % of your objectives going according to
 568 schedule is pretty good. you've got thirty percent you've got a react you've
 569 now gotta be able to set priorities in order to set priorities and that's part
 570 of my job changing direction, setting priorities. You have to be able to

571 think logically you have to be able to say to yourself if I change this
572 project then I need to do that to that project etc. I believe that people
573 must have logical minds I do not believe that they can have illogical minds
574 and be successful business people. really what it does is help you think
575 out processes in order to set priorities. The alternative is guess (1.5)
576 LW: Given that ***** seems to have quite a well set up structure are
577 there any structures that help you do your job of managing?
578 AC: I mean clearly the structure I like is to. inna Organisation clearly set
579 apart areas that can be split based on either function or service delivery
580 because we're in a service business so If I can split the Organisation down
581 into different types of service that works and also keep the formulae in
582 mind that no manager should have more than 15 people underneath him and
583 so forth. Nobody should have more than a direct span of six or seven people.
584 Organisational structure one of the critical success factors, otherwise
585 the manager at the top will overheat and will not be able to succeed
586 without the proper organisation its one of things I concentrate on when I
587 take over an area the first thing I do is logically set out what I think is
588 the best Organisation and then aim to for that somewhere down the road.
589 I'm a big believer of using teams that you have and putting the right
590 people in the right jobs as oppose to wiping out the people that exist and
591 bringing in a whole new force. so based on what your talents are out there
592 that helps you form your Organisation but the main thing you don't want
593 tha tto overburden you with forming your organisation the main thing is
594 looking at the business and you find out what your business needs are so
595 you set your organisation around those needs and then you find the right
596 players to fit into pieces. If you don't have the right players I think its
597 worth changing your Organisation slightly to come up with a result (.) but
598 utilise the players you have (.)
599 LW: What about the way the players are operationalised? How they. I.I
600 suppose I'm hinting at whether or not meetings might be the way for one
601 particular team to function through or why in many situations you choose
602 the one to one communication or why in another situation it would be
603 reports and memos (inaudible)
604 AC: [[Oh yeah I mean reports and memos are updates setting direction
605 should never be on a memo.never. so when your setting your organisation
606 that shouldn't come out on a memo for the first time you should have
607 individually talked to all players told them which part they have and why,
608 why it is logical and the objective behind it and that should come from
609 verbal communication, face to face and some kind of conversation not a
610 one way conversation because many times I'm wrong.
611 LW: =mmh

- 612 AC: =and I get great feedback from my managers saying okay we hear what
 613 your saying but It'll work better this way. Okay lets give it a try.
- 614 LW: So those are really just tools. tools of the trade that you pick up as
 615 appropriate?
- 616 AC: That's right
- 617 LW: but its the manager who decides their appropriateness?
- 618 AC: [[yes
- 619 LW: for a situation?
- 620 AC:= yes otherwise he wouldn't be a manager he'd be a clerk
- 621 LW: rather than the other way around? I just feel that in some situations
 622 its the manager running round the meetings and the memos?
- 623 AC: We kill that here(2.0) If I see. We have a very clear rule. If you've
 624 issued a memo on anything other than an updatem(2.0) memos should be
 625 for updating direction that's already been set. Reports should be for
 626 monitering direction that's already been set. Memos should never be used
 627 for setting direction (2.0) or complaining or whatever if I ever see one of
 628 those memos come across my desk the individual who writes it(1.0) its
 629 made very clear to them that that's not the purpose of the memo and that's
 630 all (.) and people just understand it(1.0) I want people to talk to people
 631 before they send memos. memos are for confirmation. piece of information
 632 to confirm what you you've said verbally (1.5) A policy may be set, that
 633 There's no food in the office right ?
- 634 LW: right?
- 635 AC:= a memo shouldn't go round for the first time saying There's no food in
 636 the office I should have spoken to the individual managers first and then
 637 the memo could come round and say as per our conversation in our
 638 meeting. it confirms the action that's been taken, but that is an actionable
 639 memo now because now that memo will stop them from eating food.
- 640 LW: so the initial decision is taken on face to face basis rather than ?
- 641 AC: [[I believe it must be a discussion otherwise your going to send a
 642 memo saying no food and get four memos back saying in this area we need
 643 some food ,.. I'm gonna get 7 memos across my desk in response and I'm
 644 gonnna back out there and answer each one of them that can all be done in
 645 a half an hour in a meeting.
- 646 LW: mmh
- 647 AC: and then agree no food except in that area and this area . end . much
 648 quicker. Memos are great for making things clear we agree to this, this
 649 and this. (1.0) for tying people down.
- 650 Here's a memo. (he picks a memo of the desk) Right ."from Chris to Peter"
 651 "this is the memo that I would propose." Okay?
- 652 LW: [[mmh

653 AC: = "sending to Peter please can you let me know if your happy with it."
 654 We've already talked about this I've talked to him about the problem, now
 655 he'll send the memo . I've talked to Peter. Right and that's what he's saying
 656 "I propose this one is okay and then I'll say "send it out" its not send it out
 657 and then cause a problem"...that's gonna set a policy we've all talked about.
 658 AC: Discuss everything, communicate before these memos which cause a
 659 lot of problems in organisations are sent.... we're very consistent. look
 660 like a team, because we do this, right and its the whole team effort. They
 661 all recognise that this is very useful. so this way I get copied on all of
 662 this, I know the discussions everyone's having. If I've got any input I'll call
 663 them up and say I got something to add to that whata you think. I'm party
 664 to most of the conversation. It's all part of the communication and team
 665 work which is absolutely critical to the success of anything that you do
 666 in a big Organisation.

MEMORANDUM

TO: [REDACTED]

FROM: [REDACTED]

SUBJECT:

DATE: 31st January 1989

COPY: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

As a guidance to finding the "right" person as my replacement, I thought the following general job description might help:

Priority No. 1 - Day to Day Management

- | | |
|--|-------|
| - Production Issues And Backlog Monitoring | - 10% |
| - Teamwork Co-ordination For GCOD | - 25% |
| - Monitor Projects And Control Issues | - 25% |
| - Human Resources Issues | - 20% |
| - Technical Assistance | - 10% |
| - Other | - 10% |

Priority No. 2 - Project Management

[REDACTED] Project # 1

- Continue to establish
- Monitor progress
- Monitor results

[REDACTED]

= 2

- Monitor progress
- Monitor performance
- Monitor growth

- 2 -

3

- Assist in establishment and relocation
- Monitor progress

4

- Monitor progress

5

- Monitor progress
- Identify risks

Priority No. 3 - Business Strategy

- Unit Cost Maintenance
- Budget Review
- Capacity Planning
- New Business Review

Priority No. 4 - Systems Development

- Design And Implement
- Project Management
- User / System Co-ordination
- Priority Setting

That's a general description which we would like to fit. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Sorry for the informal note but I thought it would help as a guide
Can we discuss further:

1. Did I leave anything out?

[REDACTED]

Please let's talk soon.

Thanks. [REDACTED]

1 LW: I thought if it's okay with you perhaps we could take a little time to
2 reflect, raise a few ideas on what as you understand. your work entails?
3 IC: no problem. for me where we where do the work (0.5) my whole
4 existence is based on a whole load of short usually relatively short
5 interactions. uhmm (1.0) on a wide range of subjects with different
6 individuals (1.0)
7 LW: Could you help me first by describing some of the key characteristics
8 of the business an Organisation you're in?
9 IC: [[yes
10 LW: because you've had so many changes as I understand it
11 IC: yes the key characteristics of the business are. I mean first of all erm
12 to give an indication of its size we have a revenue allocation of about
13 forty four million in cash terms people tell me to er convert that to er to
14 a turn over in the private sector you should multiply that by three
15 LW: right
16 IC: yes uhm certainly that was the point when they were looking for
17 general managers, were looking at commensurate roles (1.0) and we
18 employ something in excess of 4000 people (1.0) we erm provide th. the
19 basis of our business. like. The mission is to maximise er the quantity and
20 quality of health care so that in fact it. we treat the greatest volume of
21 people to a good standard but in the resources that we have available,
22 that's really the purpose of er of our business(1.0) erm the characteristics
23 of the Organisation are that there's a General management structure. the
24 health service, and this Authority is no different here it's erm
25 characterised by a large number of professions many of them who in their
26 professional work are autonomous.
27 LW: mhm
28 IC: =and are not fitting easily into a defined system of accountability
29 which adds to the complexity in dealing with them
30 LW: mhm
31 IC:= and er uhm obviously to a consumer orientated thing (.) erm we're
32 characterised by a fair amount of central control nationally but an awful
33 amount of flexibility you know the broad framework i:s decided nationally
34 like you would have an acute hospital what we do in it is totally left to
35 people here
36 LW: has that recently changed ?
37 IC: no that's always been the case but we've got a much tighter review
38 system which actually checks what we're doing more
39 LW: mhm
40 IC : so that's where we are in relation to that particular erm set of
41 circumstances uhm and I think those are the main things I'd want to claw

- 42 out. We we have in a resource terms not only manpower money but a very
 43 large estate component to manage so that er in many ways we're very
 44 comparable to most other Organisations, the thing that makes us I think a
 45 a bit different is the highly professionalised nature now other
 46 industries have that but doctors nurses and so on uhm seem to have
 47 greater degrees of community respect and er professional independence
 48 LW: [[mhm
 49 IC:= than many others do
 50 LW: How does that alter your task I mean of managing ?
 51 IC: [[well it makes it more difficult because on. in their professional
 52 things, I mean There's no way that one can actually impose instructions
 53 without much negotiation and a degree of persuasion
 54 LW: something I've noticed as common to the managers is their technical
 55 IC: [[yes erm we're quite different because we are generalists that's why
 56 its different, its easy if I were a biochemist er to instruct bio-chemists
 57 because I could bring my professional knowledge into play
 58 LW: mhm
 59 IC:= but er as we're talking in this case about a general management issue.
 60 I mean in many cases my role is about where to balance erm the views of
 61 all the professionals. It makes it actually important that you do
 62 appreciate what they're talking about and that you understand what they're
 63 talking about but on the other hand you've got to know enough of what
 64 they're talking about to be erm (1.0) conned I suppose is the word by most
 65 of the. yeah coz most people use arguments that are peripheral depending
 66 on the case that they want, to er put, an life's about seeing through all that
 67 LW: I was going to ask you what being effective in your job meant in view
 68 of what you've said perhaps I should extend it so that you also tell me wh
 69 IC [[we're going onto that (0.5)
 70 LW: for those managers below you how you judge their effectiveness
 71 because there might be a difference?
 72 IC: (clears throat) yes I mean being, I mean .first all ,I mean I think the
 73 other thing in effective I think to be effective in this sort of job you've
 74 got to listen and you've got to know people you've got to know the
 75 business, you've got to know what happens on the shop floor and its all
 76 about making connections between what people say between what they
 77 perceive between what things are really like because it would be wrong to
 78 assume the way things are presented is. that is the way they are.the most
 79 dangerous thing I find is for me to sit and think of the things that are
 80 happening
 81 LW: mhm

- 82 IC: because usually what I think is happening and what actually is (.) is er.
 83 there are gaps and that's the same for any Organisation (0.5) so we need to
 84 be constantly on the. feedback and monitering and so on. Being effective
 85 what is what do I expect from my managers? (1.0) well I expect them
 86 really to give er (clears throat) Their role is about three or four things
 87 the first. They must provide a good quality service (1.0) they must
 88 communicate well and involve with involve their staff (.)
 89 LW: so given that you've said (.) ehm how do go below the surface judge
 90 the quality of their service?
 91 IC :well we talk we talk about. we have parameters which talk about how
 92 they perform, we have performance indicators which compare us with
 93 other districts other authorities also about you know things like how
 94 quick people get access to care, when they come(.)how they're received
 95 LW: mhm
 96 IC:= erm (1.0) you know (.) do we. we. Do people deal with them sensitively
 97 or insensitively, so that there are those sorts of criteria on on the quality
 98 LW: they're procedural criteria? you've quantified it ?
 99 IC:= yes but equ equally you know most people are really very technically
 100 competent but I mean there are occasions when technical competence
 101 becomes an issue. I mean there are three dimensions to quality I mean one
 102 is a social er emphasis of things er because most people judge whether
 103 we do very well or bad as an organisation er not on how well (.) the doctor
 104 cures them but on whether the nurse smiles at them
 105 LW: mhm
 106 IC: because people understand that (0.5) they don't understand sort of all
 107 the interactions and all the technicalities. So that we've we've clearly
 108 working on this is that er deals with that (.) the second thing er I
 109 mentioned is communication and staff involvement and I judge people very
 110 much on that because that says a little bit about how much they know is
 111 going on and the third thing is is obviously er on financial control all of
 112 the things that they have to do they do within the financial allocation and
 113 er that allocation and that's part of the job for me, not only managing this
 114 years activity within the defined resource levels, but planning the
 115 developments within the overall planning system. framework which exists
 116 in the authority todo this so their jobs are really about those four things.
 117 LW: So those four standards can be applied really to
 118 IC: [[to any gener. I believe to any of the functional managers er I actually
 119 believe that they can be applied to managers in any business as well
 120 LW: mhm
 121 IC: and I think that the other thing that thata perhaps is, when you break

- 122 that down there then becomes a fifth component uhm which is about
 123 tasks that have to be done. again There's always. to set people tasks its about
 124 moving this service to there and making that change you know whether or
 125 not they achieve that is a further criteria but basically the components of
 126 quality er communication anything else er planning the other is really as
 127 I've mentioned is really about achievement, that's how we judge them
 128 LW: so they're the skills perhaps you'd identify of the good manager?
 129 IC: yes. I mean. I think they come out in other things, if you wanted to say
 130 to me what actually are the skills, well I mean, I think that a high level of
 131 interpersonal skills (.) erm about knowing people, dealing with people,
 132 being able to judge people spotting strengths and er erm in individuals and
 133 exploiting them erm minimising weaknesses, dealing with individuals
 134 development all that's part of the set of skills There's also another set of
 135 skills which is also about analysis, judgement erm knowing your onions (.)
 136 LW: mhm
 137 IC: = recognising your own limitations
 138 LW: so if I wanted to to try and identify the factors thata inna the work
 139 how would I see those?
 140 IC: well you'd have to. you'd see I I I actually don't .I believe that a lot of
 141 this is knowing one when you see one
 142 LW: yeah
 143 IC: you you know and you're looking for a fit, I mean yes there are certain
 144 basic skills
 145 LW: mhm
 146 IC: but they they have different weightings according to the job, I mean
 147 writing good papers er good reports is a requirement in some jobs but not
 148 in others so that I think you've got to weigh the job,
 149 LW: mhm
 150 IC: = Identify the skills that are needed and match people against that
 151 particular job er and I think that er basically my biggest task is getting
 152 the right people with the appropriate skills in the right place.
 153 LW: Mmh is that because you haven't been in the position that long?
 154 IC: yes sixteen months
 155 LW: has that been perhaps your most major concern?
 156 IC: yes it has, I've reorganised everything (.) taken a million pounds of our
 157 management costs (.) erm and I should stress that our management costs
 158 weren't high (.) er but that has been very very important because it says
 159 so much not only about our management arrangements but also about
 160 where our priorities are (.) and about how we see things and above all its
 161 given us the opportunity uhm in a redefined way to tell people what's

- 162 expected of them little more clearly (.) and er the things that weren't
 163 numerated before(.) basically what we've done.
- 164 LW: so how have you done that. is it by developing a team or er?
- 165 IC: =yes that's what we're trying to do. I mean we have built a team up (.)
 166 uhm There's a long way to go, but basically the thing that's amazed me in
 167 our position is that two years ago the same people that were here with
 168 one or two changes, and I literally mean one or two, and I don't mean any
 169 more. er with a same group of people as ended up being two million
 170 overspent and sorta doom and gloom the same people have got us into two
 171 million surplus within eighteen months and its its quite a. that's worth a
 172 study in it::self about how that can happen, because most people say well
 173 you've come and its new which isn't it isn't me I mean they've done it.
- 174 LW: but perhaps you've instilled* a motivation?* (inaudible)
- 175 IC: [[well yes, the well the other thing* the other the other thing is to do
 176 with style we've adopted a particular kind of style (0.5) er and I think that
 177 if you are saying about you know the essence of your research is how
 178 things get done I actually think its all about a leadership style
- 179 LW: mhm
- 180 IC: and (cough) its about realising several things about realising what's
 181 expected its about knowing where you're going and if you know where
 182 you're going you realise what your expected. you should then be able to
 183 discern what you have to do to get there, what people expect you to do
- 184 LW: yes
- 185 IC: =what your role (inaudible) and the other thing is some of the people
 186 would say would say its fear (.) uhm of failure and so on. and I don't see it
 187 as that it its almost realising that if you don't do it there are
 188 consequences
- 189 LW: mhm perhaps you'd clarified all. just clarified the picture?
- 190 IC: I think that's all it is. but most people would say, well, you know, it its
 191 quite untypical to have a such a clear picture in the NHS but most people
 192 say well some of its down to fear, but I mean I don't relate to that and my
 193 favourita thing to relate it to is sport and er if you look at well organised
 194 football teams (2.0) erm they all usually have a manager whose quite
 195 clear about what he's meant to be doing. the purpose of the game is clear
- 196 LW: mhm
- 197 IC:= right (1.0) the purpose of individual players and their roles is quite
 198 clear (.) you know you never see Liverpool go onto the pitch and have a
 199 discussion about who is going to be in goal. all that's sorted out before
 200 hand but they're left when they're on the pitch to express themselves and I

201 think that that you can only do that if people know what's expected
 202 because I think expression comes from confidence (.) confidence comes
 203 from knowing what you're doing
 204 LW: mhm
 205 IC:=er (.) and uhm motivation comes from erm. you know most people would
 206 say I'm picking up the feel of it because I actually believe that its quite
 207 unreal to think that if we failed in all our targets then nothing would
 208 happen (2.0)
 209 LW: mhm?
 210 IC: because There's a penalty for failure (2.0) whether that penalty is the
 211 sack, having your bonus not paid, or what have you or whether its just
 212 down to you yourself knowing that you could do better which in some
 213 cases is much more hurtful er doesn't matter but there are consequences
 214 my favourite sortof expression is to say well look you know you've gotta
 215 appreciate it from my point of view erm (1.0) even a high ranking top
 216 flowing health authority in a managerial sense is uncare caring
 217 and if I look at Brian Clough he took over Nottingham Forest and
 218 Derby county when they were both (.) second no third bottom in the second
 219 division now Brian Clough had a choice (1.0) he either had to accept that
 220 they were going to go on being second or third bottom (1.0) which was
 221 untenable or he had to get the players to play better or if the players
 222 couldn't play better he had to get players who could
 223 LW: mhm
 224 IC: Now some people would tend to say that's a very very sortof (.) fearful
 225 er erm (.) approach and people do it because they're frightened andso on
 226 well I think that's right, I can understand that point of view but I actually
 227 think that that doesn't recognise the reality of life (.)
 228 LW: mhm
 229 IC: you know the reality of life is that er (.) for most action there's a
 230 consequence
 231 LW:mhm
 232 IC: so life's all about clearing hurdles and er if you don't clear hurdles its
 233 almost like er (.) where. when a yuknow where if you don't jump that
 234 hurdle er the five routes that where open if you did, suddenly diminish
 235 LW: mhm
 236 IC: and I think its about bringing a clarity and reality and being prepared
 237 to live it out (2.0) because I you know I don't actually believe that that
 238 there is an intrinsic difference between the quality of managers in the
 239 public or private sector(.)
 240 LW: mhm

- 241 IC: I think since the NHS re-organisation(.) in fact its become apparent
 242 that most public sector managers er certainly when we get people to
 243 assist from the private sector their amazed at the quality of erm (.) of the
 244 managers.
- 245 LW: mhm ye::s you've initiated a turn around in that year
- 246 IC: [[and [[that's right and I think that and I think that. that's the position
 247 nationally so I don't think we're worse or their better or anything like that
 248 because I just think that we're managing, I think we're functioning
 249 because (.) and you've put your finger on it really, because of clarity
- 250 LW: mhm on my initial meeting with you I noticed that you could give
 251 clarity to the situation
- 252 IC: yes that's all I think it is and erm what, if I have a role my role is is
 253 giving direction, bring clarity and er effectiveness in my job is about I
 254 suppose these things really when I think about them. Bring clarity, setting
 255 the direction, having brought direction making sure that people know, the
 256 key actors understand (2.0) then supporting, helping, making sure that the
 257 key actors live out er their clarity (.)
- 258 LW: how do you do that?
- 259 IC: well I have a series of regular meetings with them as individuals(.) we
 260 meet as a group as a team, to check on different things (.) and er
 261 sometimes it actually means, I'm not a rigid person but sometimes the
 262 only way you can actually push that on into those realms of clarity and so
 263 on is when I'm being very rigid
- 264 LW: mhm rigid in (1.0) terms of personality or in terms of formalising?
- 265 IC: [[rigid [[yeah, well in terms of formalising formalising in terms of
 266 personality and in terms of insisting that certain things are done
- 267 LW:mhm
- 268 IC: you know particularly when there are not. usually I find that most
 269 people don't like doing nasty things (1.0) and yet for me erm there are
 270 occasions when you actually have to be quite rigid with eh. One of the (.)
 271 and its part of my makeup I can separate very easily (.) the consequences
 272 of the Organisation. the Organisational issues from the personality issues
- 273 LW: mhm
- 274 IC: So that in other words (1.5) if I feel part of the Organisation is
 275 wrong (1.0) I can articulate and say its wrong, its wrong for these reasons
 276 and if its wrong for these reasons its Mr X (1.0) I don't actually let MrX
 277 (1.0) cloud my vision of (1.0) the analysis
- 278 LW: right
- 279 IC: so that the position of Mr X doesn't influence my position with the
 280 Organisation (0.5) we then move on a different tram line which is about how
 281 do we look after Mr X and then I think I have a duty to be compassionate

282 and caring and do the very best I can in all senses (2.0) for Mr or Mrs X (.)
 283 know I suppose this is another example of clarity because what tends to
 284 happen is that individuals get them all jumbled up and usually they result
 285 in no action, deterioration or compromises which makes things worse than
 286 they (.) actually where so that I think there are are occasions when I have
 287 to bring that clarity with the the my team. which says the Organisational
 288 problem is that.lets solve that, how do we solve that ?
 289 LW: mhm
 290 IC: right and so my job is really about redefining problems (.) all the time
 291 (1.0) so that we actually deal with the problem (.) and not try to
 292 accommodate (.) within it (1.0) you know I believe in the staged approach
 293 which you you know deal with, quite often if you deal with an issue you
 294 solve one problem and create ten other issues (.) right?
 295 LW: mhm
 296 IC: know before we go actually solve the one problem and create these
 297 other ten issues you've got to work out whether the ten are worse than the
 298 one (0.5) and there has to be some analysis (.) because quite often people
 299 (1.0)'ll not decide things because they're so burdened by th'other issues (.)
 300 LW: mhm what are (inaudible but sounds like 'these other issues')
 301 IC: [[its almost like going through a tunnel (1.0)
 302 IC: I think there are several things one the health service has a culture of
 303 its own.its used by us as an excuse far to often as an excuse for not doing
 304 things (.) its one of the great social accounts of life. I believe that people
 305 always have a social account (.) as to why we shouldn't do things
 306 LW: mhm
 307 IC: one of the big boxes is (.) culture of course
 308 LW: is that a managers account?
 309 IC: yes yes its its really the same as people say to me well I don't want to
 310 it(laugh) means they haven't got the guts to yes you know haven't got the
 311 guts to and I hear it right the way through oh we could never do this in the
 312 health service its the same as in the health service managers say oh we
 313 could never do this in this industry you know they're really saying well I
 314 just. its its too much hassle. I can't .I haven't got the conc. I 'm not going
 315 to expend energy working through concept .I mean they're saying lots of
 316 other things to me
 317 LW: mhm
 318 IC: and its about all those. there area number of phrases like that(.)
 319 uhmm and I've always worked in the system, and I, I've never (1.0)
 320 operated it. I mean the funny thing is I've never been any different I mean
 321 most people think that the general management programmes brought about
 322 all this change but I've never operated any different in what ever

323 administrative or general management role I've had I've just been the
 324 same. I think that er If you were to say to me what does that come from
 325 then yes I know about the business and ave grown up init erm (.) perhaps
 326 this sounds immodest I've picked up picked up er I'm quite good at
 327 improvising and I can sort a pick things up from somewhere else and make
 328 them work for us. an the most important experience I ever had was er(.) I
 329 used to play for a professional football team in me younger days and the
 330 person who educated me most, I mean most about managing people because
 331 that's what it is about at the end of the day erm (.)'t wasn't all only exams
 332 and all the reading I had to do (.) it was actually the trainer of Carlisle
 333 United who is actually now retired because I quickly saw from him how he
 334 changed his approach, style (2.0) ina way that people always did what he wanted.
 335 LW: so is your management style as adaptive?
 336 IC: =very adaptive my style is quite unusual....most people say. I do
 337 recognise that my style is very very different from the vast majority of
 338 of health service managers.
 339 I mean my values are totally different. My values are put the patient first
 340 but not to. I mean every one says that. but the difference is I live it and
 341 act it out. and that comes from a number of experiences I've had in my
 342 career where people have been (.) deprived of care through er what I would
 343 call stubbornness you know people with cancers couldn't get treated
 344 because we couldn't. the Organisation couldn't type twelve letters or
 345 supply a nurse for half a day or something like that and I've pledged
 346 myself to eradicate all those nonsense
 347 LW: mhm
 348 IC: they're the sort of managerial games that people play in er trying to
 349 secure resources (1.0) I make it absolutely clear that if people do that
 350 here they get shot.
 351 LW: for you to say that you have an interest in the patient seems to me
 352 that you've permeated quite a number of different levels
 353 IC:[[yes oh I do everything in my in my, my whole frame of reference eevry
 354 every penny you spend evry short term programme we do I'm saying well
 355 how do we maximise this for the patient and in fact our whole theme has
 356 been. the reason why I mentioned about it. the management team has
 357 changed our priorities is because we took a million pounds away from non
 358 patient areas and put them into patient areas (.) and that was the purpose
 359 of it and its. so. so I feel very intense about that and I'm almost
 360 obsessional
 361 LW: mhm
 362 IC: and (2.0) it goes back to a personal experience I had really where my
 363 father was ill, he died actually and he was very well looked after in

364 Carlisle and in the place I was working had he had the same condition he
 365 couldn't have got treated er uhm and I thought well (1.0) golly you know
 366 what about the. what about the rest of the people here they used to go
 367 forty miles in an ambulance which was most uncomfortable coz they had
 368 stress fractures and I started asking myself (.) about the same time a
 369 haematologist came in a new appointment and said I'd like to start this
 370 form of treatment and I said well why can't you and his colleagues where
 371 laughing at him saying oh its no use asking you'll never get anything and I
 372 was new then as well and er it was all. we sorted it and from that day
 373 that was one example but there are many. the sad thing is as we sit here
 374 talking someone in **** * There's that sort of social account
 375 LW mhm ri::ght. Okay
 376 IC: ana as far as I'm concerned you know I'll zonk into that how do I know
 377 what people feel? well sit and talk to them I'll go and talk to them to
 378 patients and nurses because in my frame of reference its all giving me er
 379 information of whether managers are representing our grass root
 380 priorities well.
 381 LW: Given you've only been here sixteen months. youra initial view of the
 382 Organisation and er your managers musta been made quite quickly?
 383 IC: yes. I mean some I knew before. you can quickly go around people and
 384 tell you who are good and who aren't, depends very much on what
 385 motivates them to say people are good and the criteria they're using (.) I
 386 mean if good means they're saying yes to everything and your two million
 387 overspent that's actually a problem you know, the er, I mean I just made
 388 judgements (0.5) on the basis of those judgements er I listened alot to
 389 alot of people, professionals and all sorts of people on the basis of those
 390 judgements we changed our top management team, in fact There's only one
 391 original member of our top management team (.) remaining in the
 392 Organisation compared with those who where here sixteen months
 393 LW: Would those be the people I met? (I refer to his direct reports)
 394 IC: yes of the group you met There's only one who was part at that level in
 395 the Organisation er sixteen months ago. so its quite a marked, a very big
 396 change I mean There's been a lot of comings and goings the basic. we still
 397 have a were very keen to keep a stable core erm and uhm we've had a
 398 stable core during that time. its quite interesting my views on selection
 399 have been very different as well because you know before you almost go
 400 for the best in evrything you quickly realise that Organisational balance
 401 is important
 402 LW: mhm
 403 IC : the last thing you want is five people all who want to prove they are
 404 the best in the world because the balance isn't there and you've got to pick

405 people who can operate in circumstances it seems self evident er but it
 406 isn't always done, certainly selection in the NHS hasn't been about that so
 407 that we did that and the interesting thing as well is that we've only
 408 brought in a er a lot of them have come from second in line (2.0) we've
 409 only brought in one other member so that I think that. er (3.0) you know
 410 assessments were based on what they'd done. what I thought they were
 411 capable of doing how I saw them respond
 412 (1.0) if you have teams that has five er people who want to be scoring the
 413 goals and no one who wants to be in the goal you've gotta problem and its
 414 about being there and funnily alot of people we appointed had previously
 415 been passed over, I mean they were all written off for one reason or
 416 another (2.0) quite wrongly in my view and here they are you know we've
 417 gone from our relative position we we're we're part of a region of ten other
 418 health authorities and without doubt we were bottom the worst of the
 419 ten by a long way. All those say we are now in the top couple and our
 420 performance rating and I think and I think next year our performance will
 421 be better than the year that's gone (2.0) because we're all feeling a bit
 422 more confident. I suppose we can take our time on a few things and the
 423 groups still new they'll be stable, have credibility.
 424 Change is easier any change is now easier than they were in the early days
 425 and I think that er that that's a tremendous credit to them (0.5)
 426 IC: and the big thing is that I. I in terms of this expected. the important
 427 thing is to tell people when they've done well (1.0) and I regularly tell
 428 people when they've done well and they're regularly told when I'm
 429 dissatisfied (1.0) and they know why and they know what they have to do
 430 to put it right and invariably they go and do it, the interesting thing is
 431 that er rarely do I find they repeat. There's only one thing where we've
 432 done it again, I'll never let it happen again erm and it isn't something
 433 that I shouldn't admit (.) I'd made an assumption about what they'd learned
 434 from the crisis and I found in one part of the Organisation they were
 435 actually repeating it that would have created another crisis so we sat
 436 down and sorted that out and that will not happen again (1.0)
 437 LW: wh what was the crisis? (1.0)
 438 IC: well basically they were overdeveloping they were overdeveloping. We
 439 didn't have a crisis. what happened was the difference was. instead of
 440 instead of it taking a very long time to spot we spotted it very very
 441 quickly so we were on to it had it put right within ten days of the signs
 442 appearing (1.0)
 443 LW: mhm (0.5)
 444 IC: and er (1.0)
 445 LW: was that a financial crisis?

446 IC: ye::s financial. yeah financial we were virtually one part of the
 447 organisation er recruited people at a rate we couldn't afford
 448 LW: mhm
 449 IC: and it was all because they'd mucked up their programmes and there
 450 wasn't control and there wasn't a sensible within the unit monitoring
 451 system, it was run without it and so. we were very quickly able to to to
 452 deal with that whereas traditionally nobody would have known until we
 453 had a big problem (.) and that'll never happen again because people were
 454 told in no uncertain terms
 455 LW: mhm
 456 IC: er how displeased I was, they were told in no uncertain terms (.) erm
 457 what (2.0) and it was quite interesting to see actually. what what was
 458 expected, they were also told whilst I was giving them all of this that er
 459 because its quite easy for them to think (.) erm particularly in an
 460 organisation where people have come. some have been counted as good and
 461 got jobs, some have gone. which is quite untypical, its very easy for them
 462 to sit and think oh golly does this mean. what about my line of interest.
 463 and it was quite interesting because part of that process I sat and still
 464 told, even though I'd rollocked them I still told them they were a mess as
 465 a round (.) but they hadn't done what I'd expected of them ande::r having
 466 left them it was put right in fantastically quick time
 467 LW: so you made yourself visible
 468 IC: I made myself visible we had a forty five minutes with the seven
 469 LW: oh that was to your immediate seven?
 470 IC: =no no it was it was in the community unit
 471 LW: mhm
 472 IC: their immediate team.
 473 LW: that might be something of your management style you you keep
 474 skipping the levels
 475 IC: =oh I do I keep I keep skipping the levels, yes. I do I mean I'm careful
 476 how I skip the levels (.) erm but on problems like that I will come and
 477 sort it. That was necessary there
 478 LW: mhm
 479 IC: usually the unit general manager would sort it but that was such a big
 480 (1.0) The reason why I did it, was because it would it was reminiscent of
 481 action. action as had got us into the first problem (.) right and it was
 482 really very important for people to know that I was constantly looking at
 483 this because my predecessor never did (3.0) and that they'd offended er the
 484 game plan cause as a team we'd all agreed a game plan (.) and that was
 485 that was it. and it wasn't even general management's fault .it was because
 486 of the way they were run there own strength just hadn't dealt with it. but

487 that was in itself quite interesting because I was. I found it really odd (.)
 488 sorta making it very clear where our people were and then saying look I
 489 still think you've. just because I've said what I've said (.) you know don't
 490 feel where going up the (inaudible) we've got problems to solve we're still
 491 the best in the country as far as I'm concerned in what we're doing and I
 492 know you're gonna do it just do it
 493 LW: mhm yeah
 494 IC: and er I found that a rather an odd sequence. and they went off and did
 495 it. and it a was important because again I'm very conscious of because of
 496 what I've had to do in the first year people have certain (.) images about
 497 about me, which is being a toughie which I'm not I'm really quite soft (1.0)
 498 LW: I've been interested in the arenas of management activity (inaudible)
 499 IC:= my main arena of management activity are when I talk to the
 500 chairman of the authority, the Health Authority itself. thereafter its
 501 quite different because the activities with my chief officers both as a
 502 group and one to one. now I have a role and they have. I think the basic
 503 activity is in one to one in discussions like this to be honest.
 504 LW: mhm
 505 IC: they're the things that are useful. they're the things that move things
 506 along, setting groups of people to look at things (.) and usually recipes to
 507 follow. I had a friend who worked for Unilever who came into the health
 508 service and phrases which he uses which are similar to mine is "that its
 509 not my job to make a decision erm its my job to make sure that the
 510 quality of the decision er is good because its taken to account all the
 511 different views that could be expressed on the topic
 512 LW: mhm
 513 IC: right and I think that I'd I think that for me erm its the one to ones
 514 because you usually they're about saying if we do this we need to check
 515 donk donk donk, speak to so and so its that sortof er
 516 LW: with a built up perhaps of a number of one to ones ?
 517 IC: = that's right, its not any one,one to one itsa because I tend to work
 518 one to one. If I want to. If I want to fix a major change of services within
 519 this unit, with the consultants I will do it all one to one
 520 LW: mhm why do you prefer one to ones?
 521 IC: [[and we'll come together. Why?
 522 LW: mhm
 523 IC:=because the. Its, because most people react differently then they do in
 524 the herd
 525 LW:mhm, yes (1.0)
 526 IC: =and er I mean I don't mind(.) we have to take the decision in the herd
 527 (.) erm but its about knowing the herd so that er er you know quite

- 528 frequently we have various opportunities were I know that people believe
 529 erm and what they actually feel but they feel unable to articulate them in
 530 some of the forums
- 531 LW: mhm
- 532 IC: so that I know them all and I'm quite prepared to put in views that I.
 533 often express erm as mine which they aren't. the're other peoples (.) that I
 534 feel need to be aired in the account, particularly contentious things and
 535 particularly with the doctors
- 536 LW: its interesting others have mentioned memos and meetings and the
 537 sortof report system as being the central arenas?
- 538 IC: (3.0) well we have all of those erm I tend to see them as the er (4.0) I
 539 tend to see them as almost like the money of management they're the
 540 basis of the transactions but there not central to me the central bit is
 541 when I have a conversation with you about X that you and I go away
 542 understanding X and knowing what to do
- 543 LW: mhm
- 544 IC:= that if your wanting to fix something (2.0) erm you can't, you can't er
 545 fix it in memos. to get there its a series of one to ones and operating
 546 across a network of people
- 547 LW: from what you've said it would be wrong to focus on meetings purely
 548 as an exhibit of management, but then if I'm looking through your eyes;
 549 part of that job is the chairmanship role er
- 550 IC: [[yeah part of its to help us get to where I think (1.0) the vision is,
- 551 LW: mhm
- 552 IC: the direction is its about its about you know, again its about being
 553 clear about the direction and getting there on that basis. really that's
 554 about all I canna tell you? Is there anything else specifically or er (0.5)?
- 555 LW: No erm (0.5) thank you er thank you very much for you help and time