



CALL FOR PAPERS
OXFORD SAÏD ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON PROFESSIONAL SERVICE FIRMS
12-14 September, 2021

From Expert to Orchestrator?

Managing Integration, Integrity and Identity at the Boundaries of Professional Practice

The role of professionals in service delivery is increasingly shifting from expert to orchestrator. They are advising from *within* the boundaries of their technical expertise and integrating *across* disciplinary, organizational, technological and jurisdictional boundaries. Interdisciplinary projects, integrated client teams, innovation ecosystems, international networks, technology-augmented delivery models and disintermediated value chains are just some examples of the boundaries across which professionals are expected to integrate. Add to that the additional pressures of work-life 'integration' and remote working that the COVID-19 pandemic has produced and it is evident how – across all these trends – efforts of integration also produce challenges of integrity and identity for professionals, the organizations that employ them and the institutions that regulate them.

We therefore invite contributions – both empirical and theoretical – which examine challenges of integration, integrity and identity at the boundaries of professional practice. These may be experienced at – or across - personal, organizational or institutional levels. We welcome manuscripts covering a range of professionals and professional organizations including law, accounting, architecture, healthcare, management consulting, and advertising. Indicative topics at the different levels may include, but are not limited to:

Professionals: As professionals increasingly operate at – and across – various boundaries, how do individuals craft their identities (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010) and give meaning and coherence to their hybrid or multiplex existence, especially where new roles cut across previously separate domains with competing expectations (e.g., Adams, 2020; Ahuja, Nikolova, & Clegg, 2017; Hendriks, 2017; Ibarra & Obodaru, 2016)? As organizational memberships become more fluid, how do professionals navigate the boundaries of individual and organizational identities (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006; LeBaron, Glenn, & Thompson, 2009)?

How do professionals avoid the overload associated with the work of boundary-spanners (Marrone, Tesluk, & Carson, 2007) and protect their own well-being when flexible working affords an ever closer 'integration' of professional and personal lives (Mazmanian, Orlikowski, & Yates, 2013), especially at times of work-from-home regimes.

Professional practice: How do professionals acquire the competence and practice of boundary-spanning (Levina & Vaast, 2005), especially at a time when such work increasingly involves integrating human and non-human elements of service provision (Armour & Sako, 2020; Kronblad, 2020)? How do long-established social practices of professional service coproduction (Nikolova, Reihlen, & Schlapfner, 2009) change when they are remote and digital? What are the boundary objects – digital or otherwise - that facilitate such integration? How does innovation spring from the integration of previously separate sets of expertise and practice (Barrett, Oborn, Orlikowski, & Yates, 2012; Cromwell & Gardner, 2020)?

Professional firms: Orchestrating and integrating service elements across national (Klimkeit & Reihlen, 2016; Salvoldi & Brock, 2019) and intellectual domains (Anand, Gardner, & Morris, 2007)

has long been the hallmark of professional firms. As PSFs become populated by a greater variety of professional and non-professional staff (Smets, Morris, von Nordenflycht, & Brock, 2017), how do leaders handle the risk of turf wars and create a sense of collective (Empson & Alvehus, 2020)? How do they ensure the integrity of their services when professional boundaries blur and ties to clients become ever closer (Gustafsson, Swart, & Kinnie, 2018; Muzio, Falconbridge, Gabbioneta, & Greenwood, 2016)?

The system of professions: Finally, we encourage a shift in perspective from the “system of professions” (Abbott, 1988) to systems of professionals. As services are provided in increasingly distributed and collaborative ways, through service ecosystems, on-shored service centres, gig platforms (The Economist, 2015), and disintermediated value chains (Thomson Reuters, Georgetown Law, Saïd Business School, & Acritas, 2019), how do professional leaders enable collaboration between sometimes unexpected allies (O'Mahony & Bechky, 2008)? At the institutional level, how are jurisdictional battle lines drawn and professional codes of ethics enforced? What are the risks of *de*-professionalization and opportunities for *re*-professionalization – in service delivery systems (Kipping, Bühlmann, & David, 2019; McCann & Granter, 2019)? Do we need to fundamentally re-think our understanding of professional projects (Feyereisen & Goodrick, 2019), jurisdictional turf wars (Heusinkveld, Gabbioneta, Werr, & Sturdy, 2018) and professional boundary work (Liu, 2017) in the age of professional systems?

Submissions

- Please submit an abstract of ca 2000 words to PSFconference@sbs.ox.ac.uk by 30 April, 2021.
- Abstracts will be reviewed and decisions announced by 15 May, 2021.
- Full papers are due by August 31, 2021.

Timing and Venue

The 2021 conference will be a **virtual event**, held on **September 12-14, 2021**. Proceedings start with an informal get together on Sunday evening and conclude on Tuesday afternoon (GMT). The conference agenda will be mindful of participants' various locations and time zones in order to maximize opportunities for interaction and discussion for all participants.

Should UK government advice and university policy allow international travel and in-person gatherings in September 2021, we may offer some opportunities for personal interaction at the Saïd Business School, University of Oxford. We will announce these options in early August 2021.

There is no fee for attending the virtual conference.

The Journal of Professions and Organization

The conference will once again partner with the Journal of Professions and Organization (JPO), launched in 2013 by Oxford University Press to further research on professionals and their organizations. As in past years, the PSF Hub at Oxford is sponsoring JPO's Best Paper Award, and the winners will be recognized during a short ceremony at the Conference.

In the first instance, please send an abstract of ca 2000 words to PSFconference@sbs.ox.ac.uk.

Deadline for submissions is 30 April 2021.

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