

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

New Managerial Frontiers—Management, Leadership, and Decision-Making in an Age of Uncertainty

John Garger

The Science Survival Academy

Dear Colleagues,

With great enthusiasm, I present the *Journal of Behavioral and Applied Management*'s latest issue, whose topic is *New Managerial Frontiers—Management, Leadership, and Decision-Making in an Age of Uncertainty*. As organizations confront rapid technological shifts, volatile economic signals, and evolving expectations of work, managers are operating in an environment in which traditional guideposts no longer provide reliable direction. The articles that appear in this issue examine this new terrain from multiple viewpoints, and collectively, they highlight how managers and leaders are adapting, improvising, and reimagining their roles amid ongoing ambiguity.

“New managerial frontiers” captures more than the emergence of new tools and technologies; it describes a fundamental shift in how managerial work is conceived and executed. Contemporary leaders must make decisions when information is incomplete, outcomes are unpredictable, and established frameworks fall short. Generative AI, hybrid work arrangements, political polarization, and rapidly evolving workforce norms have introduced unprecedented layers of complexity. Managers now experience the dual challenge of stabilizing daily operations while interpreting signals from an environment that rarely speaks with one voice. Such dynamics demand new forms of sensemaking, adaptable decision processes, and a willingness to revisit long-held assumptions about leadership and organizational behavior. Managers' ability to function under uncertainty will shape not only organizational performance, but employee wellbeing, innovation trajectories, and long-term institutional resilience. Uncertainty has become structural condition rather than temporary disruption, and organizations that continue to rely on outdated assumptions risk falling behind. The research that appears in this issue serves as both resource and a catalyst, encouraging scholars to push theoretical boundaries and inviting practitioners to reimagine the skills and mindsets required for the future.

Articles Appearing in this Issue

Lauren Archer and Stephen Linenberger examine how burnout affects decision-making among U.S. Air Force aircraft maintainers, a group essential to mission readiness

yet understudied in research. Through phenomenological interviews with five veteran maintainers, the authors identify five interconnected themes—toxic work culture, job tempo, self-efficacy, leadership support quality, and job satisfaction. Their analysis situates these themes within broader extant burnout and leadership literature, offering insights to improve managerial practices and strengthen decision-making effectiveness in the maintainer workforce.

Ann-Katrin Voit introduces a theoretical framework that explains how organizations manage internal conflicts when implementing sustainable mobility. Integrating stakeholder theory, organizational change research, and sustainability transition literature, it conceptualizes acceptance as an ongoing negotiation shaped by hierarchy, competing interests, and value-based resistance. Emphasizing temporal and normative dynamics, the framework clarifies why sustainability efforts succeed or stall. The paper concludes with practical guidance for practitioners who navigate such tensions in complex institutional environments.

Allona Murry and Ericka Lawrence examine how servant leadership influences emotional exhaustion and unethical behaviors among employees who vary on perceived employability. Grounding analysis in social exchange theory, the authors hypothesize that individuals low in employability are more susceptible to exhaustion and engage more often in unethical conduct. The authors find that servant leadership activates positive exchange dynamics that reduce emotional exhaustion, which in turn lessens unethical behaviors.

Mikaila Mariel Lemonik Arthur investigates how consultants contribute to institutional isomorphism in U.S. higher education, where colleges and universities spend billions annually on external guidance. Using documentary evidence, the study questions whether consultant-driven changes truly reflect mimetic isomorphism. The author proposes a model of meta-mimesis, suggesting that isomorphic pressures influence both the hiring of consultants and the standardized practices they disseminate across higher education.

Bryan C. Hughes's editorial suggests that the post-2020 era marks a shift from the “Great Resignation” to a deeper “Great Reflection,” prompting renewed scholarly and

practical attention on workplace culture and leadership. Emphasizing that toxic environments are neither inevitable nor acceptable, the author calls for a leadership paradigm grounded in empathy, humility, accountability, and cultural health. The author urges scholars and practitioners to integrate insights across disciplines to transform workplaces into communities of purpose, belonging, and sustained human potential.

Sara B. Kimmel's book review examines Kenneth Wilcox's *The China business conundrum*: Ensure that "win-win" doesn't mean western companies lose twice, a book that blends personal experience with analytical insight into Chinese business and governmental culture. Drawing on his leadership role in establishing Silicon Valley Bank's joint venture in Shanghai, Wilcox contrasts western assumptions with the realities of operating in China. The review highlights the book's practical value, its reflection on the bank's broader successes and failures, and its relevance to readers seeking to understand cross-cultural management and global financial strategy.

Issue Conclusion

As we conclude this issue, I am struck by the shared aspiration running through each contribution, the belief that even amid uncertainty, leaders and organizations can choose to change with intention and integrity. The research, reflections, and reviews gathered here remind us that progress is not a matter of predicting the future but of engaging it with curiosity, courage, and compassion. My hope is that these articles inspire continued dialogue and action, helping scholars and practitioners to build workplaces that are not only more resilient, but more humane, purpose-driven, and worthy of the people in them.



John Garger
Editor, JBAM

John Garger (john@johngarger.com)
