

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

### Navigating Complexity in Organizations and Society

**John Garger**

The Science Survival Academy

Dear Colleagues,

This issue of the *Journal of Behavioral and Applied Management* brings together a set of contributions that collectively examine how individuals and institutions respond to complexity, uncertainty, and evolving expectations in organizations and society. Across empirical research, teaching cases, editorial reflection, and a book review, the pieces in this issue converge on a central concern: how leaders, systems, and professionals navigate environments characterized by disruption, competing demands, and persistent tensions between aspiration and implementation.

#### Articles Appearing in this Issue

David Tataw and colleagues investigate the experiences of frontline healthcare workers during the Covid -19 pandemic, offering a timely and methodologically rigorous analysis of individual and organizational factors that associate with adverse outcomes. Drawing on a modified open systems framework and a multi-state sample of healthcare professionals, the study identifies resilience, leadership perceptions, and interprofessional healthcare practice as correlates of burnout, turnover, and workplace conditions. Particularly noteworthy is the finding that interprofessional healthcare practices correlated negatively with resilience and perceptions of leadership, suggesting that organizational design and relational dynamics are more consequential than previously assumed.

Michelle Ruiz addresses a critical yet underexplored population within healthcare systems: medical technologists in rural and uncertain settings. By examining the role of idiosyncratic deals in shaping turnover intentions, the study highlights how individualized employment arrangements interact with psychological and relational factors such as trust in leadership, self-efficacy, and voice behavior. Findings extend the literature on recruitment and retention by demonstrating that flexibility alone is insufficient; its effectiveness depends on the broader social and leadership context in which it is embedded. This study not only fills a gap in the literature, it offers actionable insights for leaders seeking to stabilize essential yet often overlooked segments of the healthcare workforce.

Sarah Dagher Al Feghali and Paul H. Jacques introduce readers to Innov'Agency, a national innovation body operating in a Nordic context, and its efforts to address complex societal challenges through mission-oriented innovation. The case foregrounds use of systems thinking, adaptive leadership, and collaborative problem-solving when addressing urban mobility and food systems transformation. At its core is a fundamental question: whether public institutions can transcend entrenched silos to drive systemic change in domains characterized by fragmentation and competing stakeholder interests. Designed for graduate and executive audiences, the case provides a rich platform for exploring how leaders convene diverse actors, experiment with solutions, and navigate uncertainty in pursuit of public value.

Kenneth York and T. J. Wharton turn attention to development of critical thinking skills in business education. Recognizing critical thinking as a learned and practiced competency rather than an innate trait, the authors present a problem-based learning activity centered on evaluating pseudoscientific claims. The approach situates students in an active learning environment in which they engage in analysis, evaluation, and evidence-based reasoning. By emphasizing repeated and deliberate practice, the case aligns with pedagogical frameworks that prioritize process over rote memorization and intellectual engagement over passive absorption. The contribution is particularly relevant in an era when distinguishing credible evidence from persuasive but unfounded claims has become an essential professional skill.

Ann-Katrin Voit's editorial provides a critical examination of sustainability governance within the European Union, focusing on the paradox that ambitious regulatory initiatives often experience dilution during implementation. Through examples such as the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive and the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, the editorial highlights a recurring pattern in which long-term policy aspirations encounter resistance once short-term economic and political costs become salient. Analysis moves beyond surface-level explanations of political compromise to suggest deeper structural tensions inherent in sustainability governance. In doing so, the author invites readers to recon-

sider how regulatory ambition is translated into practice and what this means for the future of sustainability as a core component of economic systems.

Ada T. Cenkci's review of Zach Mercurio's *The Power of Mattering: How Leaders Can Create a Culture of Significance* addresses a concept that resonates across many of the contributions in this issue: the human need to feel valued and recognized within organizations. The review underscores Mercurio's argument that a "mattering deficit" undermines wellbeing, commitment, and performance, while emphasizing that fostering a sense of significance does not require complex interventions. It instead emerges through everyday interactions and leadership behaviors. By connecting individual experience to organizational outcomes, the book, and the review, reinforce the idea that effective leadership is grounded not only in strategy and structure, but the quality of human relationships.

### Issue Conclusion

The publication of this issue is the result of a collective effort. I extend my sincere gratitude to the authors for their contributions, to reviewers for their careful and constructive evaluations, and to the editorial team for its ongoing commitment to maintaining the quality and integrity of the journal. Their work ensures that each issue advances both scholarly understanding and practical insights.



John Garger  
Editor, JBAM

---

**John Garger** ([john@johngarger.com](mailto:john@johngarger.com))

---