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# **Interim Management In Action**

An interactionist study of  
the socialization of interim managers  
in organizational settings

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### Abstract

*This article is the result of a six-month dissertation carried out by the authors in 2003. In the dissertation we integrate ideas from socialization and managerial control theory to view the effectiveness of the socialization process of interim managers as an interactionist process between two trajectories – that of the organization and that of the interim manager. Based on this, a theoretical research framework for investigating the socialization process is developed. Drawing on case studies of four companies, we argue that assignments with a high and low degree of change call for different tactics. Overall, the case analyses reveal that organizations refrain from taking responsibility of the socialization process, which has a detrimental impact on the success of assignments.*

For years the agreed upon recipe for organizational success has been for managers to ‘lead by example’ and ‘live the values’. The attitude that “you can't expect the employees to care for your company if the boss isn't likely to be around in a few years” has been a universally accepted truth. Hence, the main managerial objective in contemporary organizations has been to create unity, coherence and commitment in the workplace through cultural leadership. In companies with strong corporate cultures the manager is a ‘corporate teacher’ and ‘cultural role model’ exemplifying the core values of the organization. As such, managers enter a ‘relational contract’, which symbolizes undisputed loyalty and commitment to the organization.

This ‘relational contract’ however is increasingly under attack wherever companies use Interim Management as a strategic instrument towards competitiveness. With Interim Management the relationship between the manager and the organization is defined in terms of transactions rather than relations. As a result, the ‘transactional contracts’ characterized by temporariness, calculative involvement, and an emphasis on monetary compensation for narrow and well specified work contributions have gained ground.

Rather than managers’ future prosperity being intrinsically attached to those of the organization, we are witnessing a managerial detachment from the corporate environment and the permanent organization is therefore slowly becoming the exception rather than the rule.

In Management Review, Interim Management is compared with heart surgery performed by a specialist and not by a general physician. Interim Management thus defines the management role as a technical activity – a series of skills – that can be applied in any organization at any given time. Consequently, the rhetoric behind Interim Management takes the social element out of management.

With a focus on independence, impermanence and individualism, Interim Management therefore represents a significant paradox to the way we perceive conventional management today.

While some argue that interim management offers a source for the precise mix of talent and experience needed, when it is needed, others take a more skeptical stance towards the current fashion of ‘virtual companies’, where expertise comes and goes according to project. Often it is the social cohesion and relationships developed over time among permanent employees that make a real difference to companies’ performance. As such, ‘culture’ is considered to be an obstacle to the inclusion of interim managers in organizations due to the lack of socialization that these outsiders are able to obtain through a short-term contract.

The interim manager arrives without corporate baggage or any vested interests. That can be an advantage but the downside may be that he or she has too little time to build trust. Several studies have also found problems of ‘social cohesion’ when interim managers enter unfamiliar organizational settings. Specifically, studies have shown that the following issues of Interim Management are key concerns for organizations:

- “Not fitting in with company culture”
- “Unaware of company practices”
- “Not part of team”

This paradox of cultural fit between organization and manager obtained through a long process of socialization thus becomes problematic when discussing Interim Management. The average learning time for a manager to become socialized in a new organizational setting is considered to be 1.5 year. However, with Interim Management assignments typically lasting between two and twelve months, the socialization period available is much more compressed and intense.

The interim manager is expected to perform and take on managerial responsibilities immediately without knowing the distinct characteristics of the organization. As a result, interim managers find themselves in a dilemma between their managerial role and social membership status as a neophyte.

Despite the amount of literature and research on Interim Management, considerably less attention has been devoted to practical understanding of the socialization process and its use in evaluating the effectiveness of Interim Management assignments. As such, a qualitative study of how interim managers become socialized into organizational settings provides valuable insights into the dynamics that are at play when experienced interim managers attempt to become effective in new organizations.

In other words, the paradox between organizational effectiveness and social cohesion warrants attention. Hence, with the apparent need for a study of how the problems of social cohesion can be overcome, our main research question is:

**Which tactics should organizations and interim managers employ to achieve an effective socialization process?**

Answering this, however, raises three ancillary research questions:

- 1) *How do organizations influence the socialization process?*
- 2) *How do interim managers influence the socialization process?*
- 3) *How do the dynamics between organizational and individual socialization tactics influence the effectiveness of the socialization process?*

The purpose of this article is thus twofold. First, we seek to gain an understanding of the problems experienced by companies using interim managers. Second, we empirically examine the relationship between socialization tactics and socialization effectiveness in order to determine how the socialization process should be handled.

**Methodology**

As to the theoretical field, we have contributed with a conceptualization of Interim Management in the context of socialization.

Since the field of Interim Management is entirely unexplored, we placed the concept in a theoretical context and developed a dedicated research framework for analyzing the dynamics in the socialization process. Hence, we combined three areas of socialization to gain an understanding of how interim managers are socialized in organizational settings.

The framework, which is grounded in an interactionist approach, consists of three parts of the socialization process: organizational socialization tactics, individual socialization tactics and socialization effectiveness. By uncovering the dynamics between the socialization tactics applied by both organizations and interim managers, we have been able to evaluate the effectiveness of the socialization process and why certain problems arise.

First, we tested and refined the theoretical research framework in a pilot study. A pivotal finding was that communication about interim managers' role and purpose, as well as authority, was imperative for an effective socialization. With these dimensions added, the research framework guided the empirical research, which has been conducted in a multiple case study containing four companies. Following the analyses, we refined the research framework according to our findings.

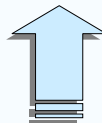
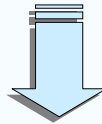
Our study, which involved a total of 16 interviews, was based on data triangulation. Hence, in each case company, the principal, interim manager, and two members of the work group were interviewed. Moreover, conducting several case studies also enabled us to triangulate the findings from each case. Our methodology allowed for sophisticated and detailed data to be gathered.

We found that the socialization tactics employed varied according to the level of organizational change involved in the assignment. As such, our socialization model represents a leap forward within the field of socialization, as it is the first model to analyze the socialization of interim managers.

Hence, the research framework has grown from being a framework for investigating the socialization of newcomers to a model for analyzing and understanding the socialization of interim managers in organizational settings.

The refined framework is shown below.

<b>Organizational Socialization Tactics</b>		
	<i>High change</i>	<i>Low change</i>
<i>Context</i>	<b>Individual</b> <i>On his/her own</i> <b>Informal / (Formal)</b> <i>Inside the work group / Outside the work group</i>	<b>Individual</b> <i>On his/her own</i> <b>Informal</b> <i>Inside the work group</i>
<i>Context</i>	<b>Random</b> <i>No sequence of stage</i> <b>Variable</b> <i>No timetable for each stage</i>	<b>Random</b> <i>No sequence of stage</i> <b>Variable</b> <i>No timetable for each stage</i>
<i>Social</i>	<b>Disjunctive</b> <i>No mentor</i> <b>Investiture</b> <i>Certain personal characteristics are desired</i>	<b>Disjunctive</b> <i>No mentor</i>
<i>Communicative</i>	<b>Covert</b> <i>Clear communication of purpose</i> <b>Explicit</b> <i>Clear communication authority</i>	<b>Overt</b> <i>Clear communication of purpose</i> <b>Implicit</b> <i>Clear communication authority</i>



<b>Interim Manager Socialization Tactics</b>		
	<i>High change</i>	<i>Low change</i>
<i>Learning</i>	<b>Immersion / (Experimentation)</b> <i>Observing, inquiring &amp; relation / trial &amp; error</i>	<b>Immersion</b> <i>Observing, inquiring &amp; relations</i>
<i>Persuasion</i>	<b>Stretching</b> <i>Selling ambitious initial proposals</i>	<b>Infiltration</b> <i>Fitting projects to focal group interests</i>
<i>Power consolidation</i>	<b>Structure / Performance</b> <i>Using formal power / Using informal power</i>	<b>Performance</b> <i>Using informal power</i>

## Results

While Interim Management challenges the belief that strong organizational commitment is pertinent to organizational prosperity, we found that organizational members do not see the discrepancy of values as the underpinnings of ineffectiveness during the socialization process. Hence, organizational members do not expect interim managers to know about the organization in detail or to act as cultural role models. Interim managers are not culture bearers, which is fully accepted and even expected by the organizations they enter. The problem of social cohesion is thus not rooted in a clash of basic assumptions and beliefs, but rather in the way the organizations and interim managers handle the socialization process.

This article backs up previous research on Interim Management and verifies that the most severe problems are found in the social cohesion between organizations and interim managers. Specifically, malfunctioning within the work group is omnipresent and has depressing consequences for interim managers' ability to master their task. There are a number of reasons for this; however, the most significant discovery is that principals are far too passive in the socialization process.

We can therefore conclude that the effectiveness of the socialization process to a large extent depends on the actions taken by the organization, in particular, the communicative aspects. Hence, with regards to the dynamics in the socialization process, it is not so much interim managers' attempts to self-socialize in organizations but rather the socialization tactics employed by the principals that affect the outcome.

Principals believe that, when recruiting a seasoned interim manager, they can take a relaxed approach and refrain from taking genuine responsibility and ownership of assignments. Hence, they fail to communicate to the work group members about interim managers' role, purpose and authority, thereby creating internal resistance. As a result, interim managers meet prejudice and opposition that has to be dealt with.

Also, some principals fail to formulate clearly defined project briefs leading up to assignments. Together, these two aspects delay and hamper an effective socialization process, as interim managers

have to spend critical time on handling conflicts, which distract the focus from the agreed objectives.

The main reason is that principals, aside from the specific assignments, often are politically motivated when recruiting interim managers. Hence, they have a hidden agenda in which interim managers are used proactively to show progress to the management group or shareholders in order to justify their own position – a situation that we label 'safeguard-management'. In relation to this, principals use interim managers to operate as organizational scapegoats who make decisions that otherwise provide principals or management with distrust and animosity – a situation we label 'scapegoat-management'. Thus, the Interim Management assignments are often of more symbolic than functional value, and principals do therefore not dedicate the necessary time and energy to the socialization process.

Consequently, interim managers are not provided with optimal working conditions in the initial phase, which harmfully influences the effectiveness of their assignments. The general consensus is that more could have been gained from assignments and companies find themselves in a situation where the full potential of Interim Management is unexploited.

Organizational socialization tactics, the first research area, shows that regardless of the degree of organizational change in interim assignments, organizations socialize interim managers in almost identical ways, that is, place them immediately in the work group. In change assignments, organizations also provide interim managers with a brief formal introduction, and refrain from planning a clear sequence of socialization stages as well as a timetable for completion of each stage. Finally, Interim managers are expected to develop their own definition of the situation, as they are not given a mentor.

The tactics, however, deviate when it comes to the communicative aspects. Hence, in change assignments organizations refrain from communicating about interim managers' role and purpose, but are very clear about interim managers' authority. In addition, principals seek to profit from interim managers' personal characteristics. This picture is fundamentally different in assignments with no change, as the communication from organizations to work group members about the

role and purpose of assignments is clear, but is highly vague regarding the authority of the interim manager. Furthermore, in these assignments, the personal characteristics were not considered relevant when recruiting interim managers.

In all, we conclude that organizations take a mechanical approach and conceive of Interim Management as a technical activity. They neglect the social element of management and regard interim managers as 'hero managers' who can perform without any organizational commitment and support.

Individual socialization tactics, the second research area, shows that interim managers differ in their use of socialization tactics depending on the level of organizational change involved in the assignment.

In assignments with a low level of change, interim managers emphasize that they play on someone else's territory and adapt projects to focal group interests in order to persuade members to commit to the mission. Also, interim managers rely solely on their job performance to achieve credibility and authority.

In assignments involving change interim managers use an approach of trial and error where they make decisions without knowing the consequences of these. This is done to progress with the projects from the beginning. To support this, interim managers aggressively sell the projects to create commitment and mobilize organizational support.

Finally, in order to gain the necessary authority in the work group interim managers more actively use the formal power and authority attached to their organizationally defined roles to push the projects. A key observation is that in assignments with a substantial degree of change, interim managers also use their job performance and informal powers to gain trust and authority from the work group.

As a whole, it is obvious that interim managers, regardless of change in assignments, emphasize the social element of management. Hence, interim managers all perceived their managerial role as a social activity, and therefore made an effort to establish organizational commitment and support through collaboration rather than firm control. In assignments with a high degree of change, however, interim managers also emphasize the technical

aspect of management as they take initial control of the process to ensure progress from the start.

Socialization effectiveness, the last area of research, shows that the three measures of effectiveness cannot be considered as separate entities but are highly intertwined. Hence, 'role clarity' has an impact on 'functioning in the work group', and 'task mastery' is highly influenced by the effectiveness of both 'role clarity' and 'functioning within the work group.' Despite these blurring boundaries, the dynamics between organizational and individual socialization tactics affect the effectiveness of the socialization process both negatively and positively.

In terms of *negative contributions*, organizations that refrain from communicating clearly about interim managers' purpose and role create anxiety among work group members. In assignments with a high degree of change, interim managers' entry represents a threat to many organizational members and resistance as well as prejudice is apparent. Organizations that do not make an effort to minimize this animosity and create internal acceptance to the project, obstruct both role clarity and social cohesion.

Moreover, the lack of communication about interim managers' authority is damaging to an effective socialization process, since interim managers only have a limited time to complete assignments. Without a clear communication to work group members about the aspect of authority, interim managers find themselves battling to implement decisions and progress with the projects. In addition, organizations that throw interim managers into projects without providing them with knowledge of relevant organizational issues make it difficult for interim managers to perform from the first day. As such, this aspect is directly correlated with ineffective task mastery.

Interim managers also contribute negatively to socialization effectiveness. The key pitfall has been their inability to sell projects ambitiously and create commitment among members of the work groups. Work group members expect that interim managers, with their high level of expertise and experience, push projects forward. Interim managers who fail to do so aggravate employees and hampers the creation of organizational support. Hence, this aspect is negatively related to social cohesion and task mastery.

Additionally, interim managers who fail to use their informal powers are compelled to exercise their formal authority embedded in their organizationally defined roles. Although this aspect may be beneficial to achieve role clarity, it does not secure social cohesion and task mastery. Interim managers are organizational outsiders who cannot carry out every single task themselves. Hence, without establishing trust and confidence, often achieved via a few quick 'wins', interim managers find it difficult to meet objectives.

With regard to *positive contributions*, organizations that provide interim managers with a brief formal introduction and basic knowledge of organizational issues while, simultaneously, allowing interim managers to become familiar with work groups immediately, are most successful. These tactics are especially applicable to the area of functioning within the work group.

The most imperative aspect is related to extensive and open communication throughout the process and, in particular, in the initial phase of assignments. Hence, clear information about interim managers' role and purpose as well as authority is positively correlated to effective role clarity, functioning within the work group and task mastery.

Interim managers contribute positively to the socialization process by emphasizing the social element of management. Hence, interim managers who make efforts to learn about organizations, employees and work processes achieve role clarity and social cohesion.

However, in change assignments making rapid decisions and learning through trial and error facilitate a process with immediate progression and therefore links to task mastery. Moreover, interim managers are compelled to focus on projects to create commitment among work group members. As such, selling projects ambitiously is imperative for an effective socialization.

Gaining authority through the organizationally defined role from the beginning is essential for the impetus of the assignment. Hence, exercising formal powers is positively linked to role clarity and task mastery. However, when projects are up and running, the formal approach needs to be substituted with an informal approach in order to

gain credibility and trust, which is necessary for social cohesion and further progression.

All together, we conclude that the dynamics in the socialization process have a strong impact on the effectiveness. Interim managers are seasoned professionals and therefore highly adept at socializing themselves into different organizational settings. However, creating focus on and selling the projects ambitiously have proven to be imperative success criteria.

We argue that the primary problems in socialization process arise because companies fail to communicate clearly to work group members, as this creates resistance and opposition that hamper a fruitful working relationship.

Also, organizations do not ensure that interim managers are properly introduced to organizational problems or issues that might affect their ability to function in work groups and effectively master their tasks. Overall, we assert that organizations should take a more active role in the socialization process.

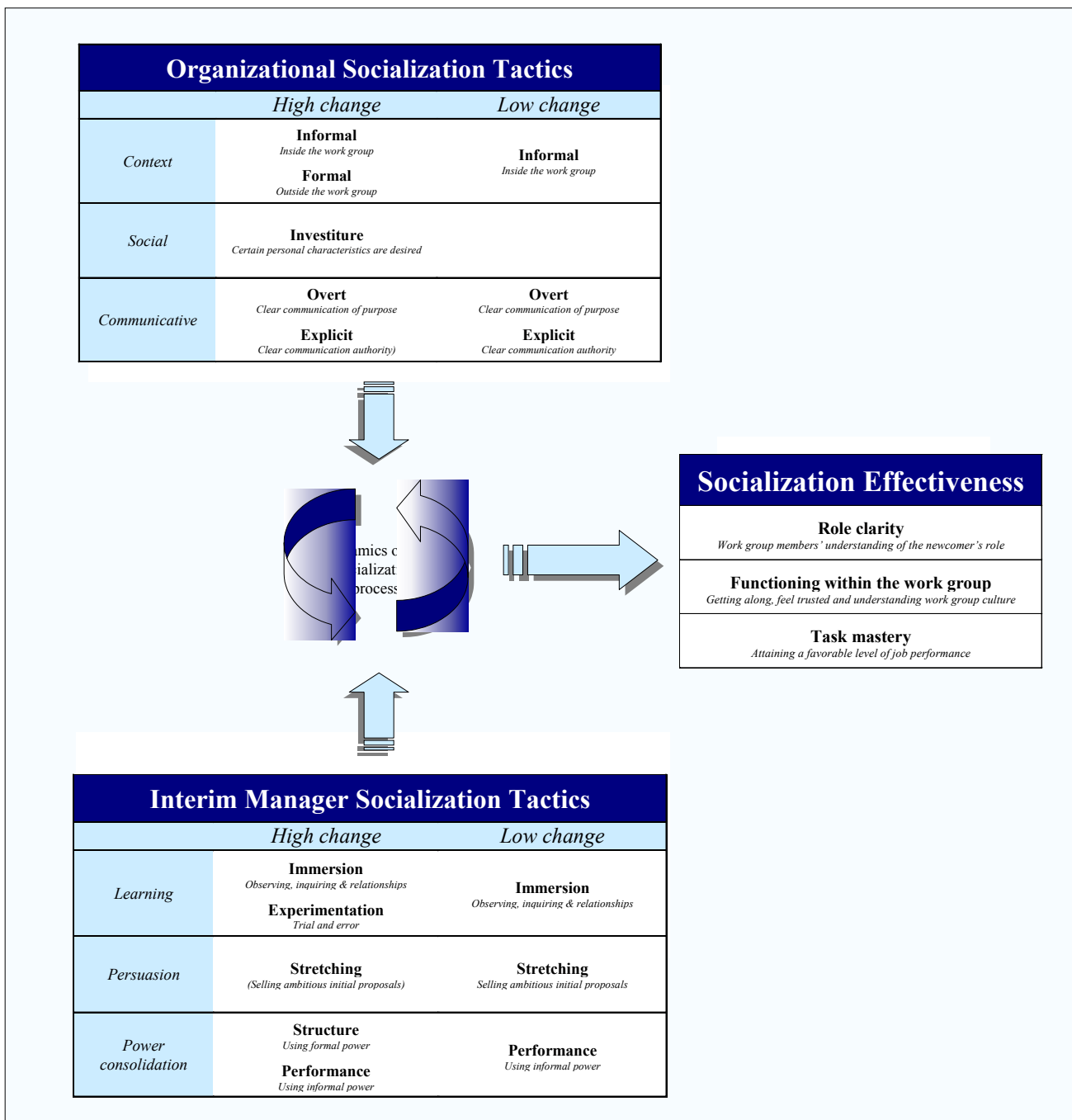
With regards to the specific observations in the study, our cases show a varying degree of organizational change in the interim assignments, which provide an excellent understanding of the problems experienced in different types of assignments as well as across companies and industries.

Thus, we argue that the conclusions drawn increase our understanding of the dynamics in the socialization processes, since the problem areas seem to be ubiquitous.

### **Successful Socialization of Interim Managers**

Having concluded on the dynamics of interim management socialization, we have developed a number of propositions for successful socialization of interim managers in different types of assignments.

These propositions are synthesized in the model below, showing which socialization tactics organizations and interim managers should employ to achieve a successful socialization process.



Throughout the study, we have focused on the socialization process, which takes place during the assignments. However, even though the socialization process is effective, other factors during the pre- and post-assignment processes still contribute to unsuccessful outcomes.

The pre-assignment process has thus been characterized by two important factors that impede an optimal socialization process. First, the

importance of precise project briefs is significant, as the briefs can undermine the entire Interim Management assignment because valuable time is wasted and results in the interim managers being socialized into the wrong settings.

Moreover, imprecise project brief lead to companies recruiting the wrong type of interim manager for the job, since the skills needed in the actual role are different from the ones specified in the project brief.

Second, as mentioned earlier, principals are often politically motivated and have hidden agendas when using interim managers. Although this might be beneficial in the long-term for the organizations, principals must be aware that when interim managers are forced to make tough decisions, it hampers their ability to build trust and relationships with employees. In other words, using interim managers as scapegoats obstruct social cohesion.

The post-assignment process is characterized by a stand still due to a number of considerations that were ignored during the course of the assignment. First, employees believe that they could gain more from the interim managers. Interim managers are considered valuable assets with a wealth of expertise that employees would like to plug into and improve their personal skills.

It should be noted that this goes beyond mentoring a single individual, as it has to do with a general upgrade of the work force. This is an area which none of the principals have considered, but should think of in the future in order to take full advantage of the interim managers' time in the organizations.

Second, companies have generally been unable to keep continuity in projects subsequently to interim managers' departure, as principals fail to appoint employees to take over. As such, assignments are left stranded – a situation that decreases the organizational value of Interim Management and leave employees questioning the use of interim managers.

It became evident in our study that interim managers seem to leave a vacuum at the end of the assignment. Using interim managers sometimes result in 'difficult hand over at termination of contract.' Retaining and institutionalizing knowledge before the interim managers leave thus seem to add to the difficulties of using temporary management resources. The problem of knowledge sharing is an area that has contributed to organizational members' believing that the process has not been optimal.

As mentioned before, interim managers arrive with a bag of expertise and experience that organizations can benefit from. As such, achieving a favorable level of knowledge transfer and thus increased organizational learning could add fuel to the Interim Management market and encourage more organizations to recruit interim managers.

In order for organizations to overcome the problems, we have developed a list of guidelines for companies engaging in Interim Management,

*Table 1: Guidelines for organizations to achieve successful Interim Management assignments*

	High change	Low change
<i>Pre-assignment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Prepare clearly defined project brief</li> <li>– Prepare understanding of the project through open communication of interim manager's role, purpose and authority</li> <li>– Explicitly inform the interim manager that his personality and mentality are desired</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Prepare clearly defined project brief</li> <li>– Secure a fit between work group and interim manager's personality</li> <li>– Prepare understanding of the project through open communication of the interim manager's role, purpose and authority</li> </ul>
<i>During assignment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Give interim managers a brief formal introduction to the organization</li> <li>– Place the interim manager inside the work group immediately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Place the interim manager inside the work group immediately</li> </ul>
<i>Post-assignment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Prepare a forum for knowledge exchange</li> <li>– Appointing an individual to be coached by the interim manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Prepare a forum for knowledge exchange</li> </ul>

As can be seen in the table, much of the organizations' efforts should take place in the pre-assignment period. The project briefs should be precise from the outset. Moreover, there is no rationale for waiting to communicate about the interim manager's role, purpose and authority until the assignments commence, as internal resistance is often created prior to the actual start.

Likewise, the problems relating to the post-assignment phase should be handled during the assignments – not after. Hence, absorbing knowledge and appointing individuals to be coached by the interim managers should be incorporated in the project plan formulated in the initial phase of assignments.

With the specific guidelines for organizations accounted for, the table below describes the guidelines for interim managers.

Table 2: Guidelines for interim managers to achieve successful Interim Management assignments

	High change	Low change
<i>Pre-assignment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research the organization to get a basic understanding of pertinent issues and challenges that may affect the assignment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research the organization to get a basic understanding of pertinent issues and challenges that may affect the assignment</li> </ul>
<i>During assignment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on learning and establishing close relations with work group members</li> <li>- Create focus on the project immediately and sell the project ambitiously</li> <li>- Make decisions via a trial and error approach in the beginning to secure instant progress of the project</li> <li>- Stress formal authority to make sure that orders are followed and the project progresses from the initial phase of assignment.</li> <li>- Create quick 'successes' to gain informal power and respect that mobilize organizational support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on learning and establishing close relations with work group members</li> <li>- Create focus on the project immediately and sell the project ambitiously</li> <li>- Create quick 'successes' to gain informal power and respect that mobilize organizational support</li> </ul>
<i>Post-assignment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share expertise and experience</li> <li>- Factor in coaching of individuals in the planning of the assignment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share expertise and experience</li> <li>- Factor in coaching of individuals in the planning of the assignment</li> </ul>

Interim managers should first and foremost seek to obtain as much knowledge of the organization in advance. Moreover, regardless of assignments interim managers should learn about the organizations and emphasize the social element of management. However, in high change assignments it is imperative that interim managers create a focus on the project to secure instant progress.

**Conclusion**

With its rhetorical promise of immediate effectiveness in any organizational setting, Interim Management pledges to be the ultimate form of management skills that are universally applicable. At first glance, Interim Management thus seems to contradict everything the Corporate Culture discourse preaches about the need for collectivism and interdependence to achieve organizational

prosperity. However, we have found that interim managers are just as much in sync with organizational members as permanent managers. Interim managers are required to engage in the same level of interpersonal negotiation and mediation as permanent managers to create trust, confidence, authority and commitment from employees.

By studying Interim Management in action we make an assault on the promises of the concept as a technical activity. Management professionals entering unfamiliar organizational settings cannot ignore the social element of management in order to be effective in short-term assignments. Hence, we argue that Interim Management is a social activity and therefore oppose the idea that Interim Management takes the social element out of management.

Hence, interim managers are just as much in sync with organizational members as permanent managers. As such, interim managers do not lead to more problems because they are organizational outsiders. This flies in the face of the Corporate Culture discourse, and means that the disbelief in Interim Management among many executives is groundless.

Being a manager in an organization you must not only be a part of the social milieu and informal setting - you also have to be a decision maker and excel on your own. Hence, both interim and permanent managers face problems of social cohesion because they take on managerial responsibilities and therefore are compelled to maintain a social distance to the employees. Furthermore, interim managers are as constrained as permanent managers by existing 'turf wars' and political games, which influence their space for maneuvering.

In relation to the organizational socialization tactics, our study of Interim Management has highlighted that the tactics employed should not only be aimed at the newcomers. Tactics toward the existing organization also influence newcomers' socialization by creating understanding and even acceptance of the newcomer prior to their arrival in the work group. Hence, we argue that the belief that socialization tactics only have an affect when directed at the newcomer is incorrect. Rather, the tactics should include the organization as a whole, or

at least the work group, since they play a large part in how newcomers eventually become socialized.

The understanding of individual socialization tactics has also been affected by our study of Interim Management. The idea that managers can choose not to socialize into the organizational setting, and take a managerial control approach to create progress, may be an option - but not a viable one. Hence, successful interim managers engage in social relationships with organizational members to increase performance of activities that they are not entirely familiar with themselves.

We thus challenge the way socialization is understood today, as we move away from socialization as an individual process to socialization as an interactionist process.

In sum, we have found that there is an idle potential in Interim management and have listed the most critical areas as well as provided guidelines to overcome the obstacles to successful Interim Management assignments. We argue that success requires a dedicated effort by organizations and a whole-hearted commitment by the principals.

Moreover, current turnover rates among permanent managers are increasing and in many companies managerial positions are not held for much longer periods than interim managers. Hence, the revolving door of management is alive and kicking and the problems experienced by interim managers when entering unfamiliar organizational settings are similar to managers in permanent positions. Hence, we argue that Interim Management is similar to conventional management and the skepticism attached to Interim Management is therefore without merit. On this basis, we therefore question the necessity to uphold the large management structures evident in contemporary organizations.

It is our hope that this article contributes with an understanding of when, how and why organizations should use interim managers. When this understanding is achieved, we believe, Interim Management could be the next major management tool for organizations in their quest for strategic and organizational flexibility.

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