



RESEARCH IN ACTION

① The Yin and the Yang of Managing

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It has been said that there are two kinds of people in this world: those who believe there are two kinds of people and those who don't. Few will deny, however, that there are men and there are women. Might they symbolize two faces of managing?

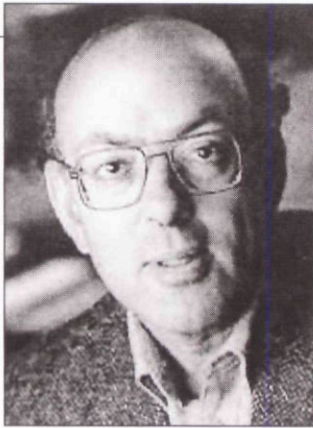
One face can be described as more aggressive, more interventionist, more like medical cure. That face has become even more dominant in recent years, especially in popular depictions of the great leader. We can call it the yang face of managing, masculine in style, but practiced by a goodly number of women too. The other face is more engaging, more inclusive, more like nursing care. It is the yin, or feminine face, but practiced also by many men.

A day in the working lives of two managers is described below. Both were heading up small, rather well known organizations in Paris. But that is where the similarities end. One preferred to race around Paris on a motorcycle; the other was inclined to glide through it on a scooter. The rest will similarly speak for itself.

A DAY WITH RONY BRAUMAN, PRESIDENT, MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIERS (FRANCE)

Rony Brauman, not coincidentally a physician, had headed up Médecins sans Frontiers (MSF, or Doctors without Borders) for 11 years when this day of observation took place. In France he was the highly visible leader of a highly visible organization, deeply embroiled in some of the most intense political issues of the day. MSF is itself interventionist in nature: it sets up health care services in trouble spots around the world.

This "day" in fact began the evening before, at Brauman's suggestion. He had called a press conference to explain why MSF had decided to pull its people out of Somalia—partly because of the danger to them, but also to express its opposition to the United Nation's role there. After spending about a half-hour briefing the 10 or so journalists, mostly from African-related publications, Brauman took questions, almost all about Somalia rather than on MSF. The press conference ended after about 80 min, at which point Brauman gave a taped interview to an African radio journalist.



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I arrived again at 9:30 the next morning, as suggested, at Brauman's small office in MSF's own small but modern building, just off the Place de la Bastille. Like most everyone else there, he was dressed casually—in jeans and an open shirt—but a tie and jacket hung in his office. Dr. P., the director general who dealt more with internal matters, was in Brauman's office when I arrived, informing him about the safety of the MSF staff in Somalia, including the problem of snipers on the roofs. "Et alors, decision quand?" Brauman asked, concerning the sending of someone to assess the situation, to which he received the reply, "Decision hier!" ["So, decision when?"... "Decision yesterday!"].

At 9:55 a.m., Brauman joined the meeting he was to have attended at 9:30, of eight people, the main headquarters management group, all with their agenda books open, scheduling. The meeting then moved into the agenda items, ranging far and wide—sending people to the former Yugoslavia, legal issues, the plans for a management retreat, a new AIDS treatment, the spread of a new wave of tuberculosis in France, a visit to Paris by the U.N. Secretary General, and so on.

People came and went, or periodically ambled to the door to light a cigarette and blow the smoke into the hall, Brauman included. He mostly listened, occasionally took the lead, and intervened a few times to express opinions or values—for example, that the plans for the retreat be kept loose. At 12:20 p.m., he moved toward the door to leave, stood there for a few minutes listening (and smoking), and finally left.

"I hope you don't mind riding on a motorcycle—it's the quickest way to cross Paris," he said as he grabbed his jacket en route to his next meeting, a live interview on French television. "Don't worry, I'm careful," he promised to someone who had been watching French motorcycle maniacs for years. (To make up for being late, he drove on the other side of the concrete abutment several times, into the oncoming lane, before tucking back in "just in time" at the next light.)

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TABLE 1 YIN AND YANG IN MANAGING

YIN	YANG
<p>Conservationist culture: engaging, inclusive Leadership like nursing care Communicating by image, feel Working more inside the organization: doing, detailing Yin stands for dark, mysterious, passive, so:</p>	<p>Interventionist culture: aggressive, intrusive Leadership like medical cure Communicating by words, drama Working more outside the organization: networking, promoting Yang stands for overt, clear, active, so:</p>
Balanced management.	

A woman met us at the door of the France 2 television station and rushed Brauman into a makeup room and then into a studio, to be briefed by the host before being seated—jacket on above the jeans under the table. The host read the news and then questioned Brauman on the situation in Somalia in general, more than on MSF in particular. This lasted about two minutes, and then it was back to remove the makeup, while a journalist friend from the station dropped in say hello and discuss various issues. We left at 1:35 p.m.

After a fast trip back to the office, and a check with his secretary ("nothing urgent"), Brauman looked around for people, found no one, and headed over to the nearby bistro to join a group of three MSF people at a table. The discussion was general at first, but then focused on a book one of them had been asked to prepare for a publicity day. Brauman guided him through the outline and explained what he wanted, while the other two people at the table took notes. "So, you've got the idea?" he asked near the end.

At 3:07 p.m., the secretary of a relaxed Brauman came in to ask if he had forgotten about his 3 o'clock appointment with a journalist from *l'Humanité*, and with that the hectic pace resumed.

For a half-hour, there was another interview about Somalia, with a photographer shooting pictures. Then, for the first time (short of shouting between helmets), I had a few minutes to chat with Brauman. "A humanitarian organization has to go against its

own interests sometimes," he said in reference to his lobbying activities on public issues. He described MSF as being in its own niche, although others have joined it, in addition to having become "intervenants publics" (public activists).

Soon the pace picked up again. (In perfect French fashion, only lunch turned out to be really relaxed.) For the next 60 min, callers came and went, encouraged by the open door next to the glass wall of his office. Dr. P., the director general, dropped in about a scheduling matter and a direct-mail campaign; an administrative person came by to clear a letter that Brauman found not sufficiently explicit; and then he looked over some other MSF outgoing mail while a computer guy came in to fix his machine. Various telephone calls followed, including one for an invitation to a public debate. After that, it was off to the director general's office for a minute before entering (at 4:40 p.m.) a scheduled meeting already in progress. A number of the younger staff was being briefed on the situation in Somalia. Twenty minutes later, Brauman, having listened, left.

Then, a few minutes after 5:00 p.m., it was back to telephone calls (about requests for meetings and the pullout from Somalia), scheduling with his secretary, and looking over more correspondence. There followed another race across Paris for a 6:00 p.m. appointment for a live interview on the France Inter radio station. (I did manage to say, "Good thing you're careful," only to be misinterpreted with the reply, "Yes—better to

arrive late than injured." We arrived uninjured at 5:58!)

There were a few free minutes before the interview, and I asked Brauman what he does when in Somalia. Meet his own people and others, he said, including United Nations personnel, mostly to help his team formulate their problem and reorient their mission if necessary, but also to develop teamwork and get himself informed.

Then he went on the air, answering more questions about the situation in Somalia, this time at greater length and with more challenge. That ended by 7:00 p.m., and we then made our way through rush-hour traffic (which proved no problem on a motorcycle, as we threaded between the stopped cars at up to 70 kph while I imagined what life might be like without kneecaps).

Back at the office, we had some time to talk about the structure of MSF, fund raising (in which Brauman claimed to be not much involved), his writing of articles and books on political issues, and his trips to the trouble spots—which have to last a minimum of a week, he said, and take up to three months of his year. Picking up on what I had heard during the day, I asked why at the very same time that he was announcing the MSF pull-out from Somalia, which happened three days earlier, the organization was now, in fact, sending some of its people back in. There was a new outbreak of fighting, he said; violence was up and the injuries had begun again.

Brauman was supposed to leave at 7:30 p.m., but when I left at 8:20, he was just going to have a final look at what was happening in Somalia.

A DAY WITH CATHERINE JOIN-DIÉTERLE, CONSERVATEUR EN CHEF, MUSÉE DE LA MODE ET DU COSTUME

In a large white room, a tiny piece of cloth is being dried on a glass table. Light shines up through it, so that the weaving can be lined up with the marks on the table. This cloth is

part of a newly received fashion garment that was donated, or else bought for as much as \$15,000. It will take from four hours to four days of full-time work to clean this garment. Then it will be put in a special cloth bag and stored in a brand new, temperature and humidity-controlled underground facility. Later, it may become part of an exhibition, in which case someone will spend at least four hours arranging it on a mannequin.

This is the Musée de la Mode and du Costume (Museum of Fashion and Dress), guardian of the legacy of high French fashion. It pursues a unique mandate with a sense of detail and attention that is rare in contemporary society. Its director for many years, Catherine Join-Diéterle, not only championed that mandate, but also reflected it in her own style of managing, including her concern for the institution. Her title, "conservateur en chef," was most appropriate.

The museum is housed in the elegant Palais Galliera, built as a palace for a duchess, and owned, together with the museum, by the City of Paris. Its administrative offices are there as well as its exhibition space, library, and offices of graphics and photography. The collection of 30,000 costumes (plus another 40,000 accessories, including hats, shoes, gloves, even umbrellas and canes) is housed in another part of Paris, where the cleaning and restoration of garments also takes place.

I arrived at 8:50 a.m. Join-Diéterle had asked me to come at 9:00, but she was already in her small office, tucked under the roof of the museum, organizing her day. We chatted until 9:15 about the museum and its founding in 1918. In France, painting comes first and sculpture second, she said, although clothing is most personal, "the relationship to the body."

At 9:15 a.m., a fax was brought in, and then we left briskly for the basement, with me carrying a Christian Dior bag full of clothing to be turned over to someone for initial preparation (including sewing over labels to discourage stealing). As we walked,

Join-Diéterle encountered various people in the halls, discussing clothing donations, the need for a child mannequin, and a Givenchy dress.

Back in the office at 9:30, her assistant, Sylvie ("my right arm") called and came in. They discussed the retirement of a staff member, and a pile of administrative papers was turned over to her. Then Join-Diéterle was on the telephone to the staff member about a date for the retirement, before the press attaché appeared to show her some clothing given her by a friend. She and Sylvie then discussed meals for a visiting group, flowers for an evening reception to honor the donor of a collection of fashion photographs, what kind of person she wanted for the switchboard job, and an individual who had offered his candidature for a post in the museum. "Oh, no, I know this guy. I don't want him," she said, to which Sylvie responded quietly that perhaps she might wish to meet him anyway. They continued on a range of issues, including Join-Diéterle's request for someone to clean the glass at the entrance.

At 9:57 a.m., someone brought in the mail, which was reviewed immediately with Sylvie: bills, invitations, catalogues, "another woman who wants to sell a wedding gown—I'll call her." There followed some scheduling, then a series of telephone calls: about a child mannequin, someone to take catalog photographs of a show going to Japan; to Sylvie about having lined up the photographer, and so forth.

At 10:35 a.m., we left to take the Metro to the other facility. (Normally Join-Diéterle would go on her scooter, she said, but as it had no place for me, she left it at home.) We arrived at 11:00 to find a number of people milling about outside. Join-Diéterle gathered the group, about twenty-five people in all, who were there for a scheduled public tour of the facilities. For about ten minutes she explained the nature of the museum and of the tour that was to take place, before turning it over to Jean-François, the press attaché. He took the group from room to room—"restoration," cleaning, the actual storage facilities, and so forth. Join-Diéterle mostly

stayed with the group, interspersing her comments periodically (e.g., describing a particular dress being cleaned on a table and saying that it was about to be sent to an exhibition in Japan, or explaining that the lights were low because strong lighting can burn the materials). She also slipped out from time to time, using the occasion to make contact with her operating staff on a variety of issues. When the group went down into the storage facility ("50% humidity, 20°C"), one of its members was afraid of taking the elevator, so Join-Diéterle accompanied her down the ramp. The tour continued, but at 12:37 p.m. she decided to leave, and we found a small restaurant nearby to have lunch and talk.

"Everything is in the head," she said. "You have to get it out." She said her door was always open, and considered herself there to be interrupted (although sometimes she had to go to the library to get things done). She took charge of a number of the exhibitions herself and handled contacts with the municipal government, while she tried to leave more and more of the internal administration—such as hiring—to Sylvie. In the evenings, she did what she called her "scientific work": giving courses (e.g., on the history of fashion), and preparing catalogs and the like, while trying to avoid telephone work. (Her son was nine at the time.)

Back at the office at 2:05 p.m., Join-Diéterle met a woman coming in the door ("a fan of clothing"), checked for messages at reception, and made several telephone calls, including one to find someone to write the text for a German show. Then the information technology person came in with some drawings: "I need some information: is this the 16th century?" She thought not—too bad, because that would have made it the oldest document in the place. "Why not mark it with a question mark?"

After some other brief comings and goings in her office, Join-Diéterle went downstairs at 2:40 p.m. to meet a man who wished to donate some prints and invitations to the museum. She took them and had him sign a document acknowledging the donation. She

was back in her office inside of ten minutes, at which point she turned to her paperwork, interrupted by telephone calls about a number of small issues.

Sylvie came in with a man at 3:17 p.m. Join-Diéterle explained the job to him (including the fact that he needed muscles to carry boxes—"We're all women here!"), and told him about the rules of the system, including the need to call in when sick. When they left after about fifteen minutes, I asked how she could have just agreed to hire the very person she was so negative about in the morning. "He's been through a hard time—had to give him a break," she said. She didn't need to add that she had enough trust in Sylvie to accept her advice.

At 3:40 p.m., as she was about to take me on a tour of the museum, Jean-François appeared, and Join-Diéterle began to tell him how she wanted a particular garment displayed in a window. Another call followed, to an expert about storage conditions for the photography collection being given to the museum, so that she could discuss it with the donor that evening. Or, at least as she put it to Sylvie, who walked in during the call, "This way I have something to say to him about it" (which followed: "Bon, j'ai fait mon boulot"—"Good, I've done my duty"). Sylvie had come in with the flowers for the evening, and they discussed the detailed arrangements.

At 4:07 p.m., we finally left for that tour, spending almost an hour seeing the facilities and the current exhibition. Along the way, Join-Diéterle met a woman in the foyer who wanted to sell some clothing to the museum. They went behind the entrance, where she examined the garments. She couldn't use them, but feeling sympathetic to someone who had obviously fallen on hard times, she gave her the names of other possible buyers.

Back in the office at 5:00 p.m., Join-Diéterle worked on a proposal for an exhibition in the spring. There were some other calls and mail, and then we had come time to talk before the reception.

There is no board of directors, Join-Diéterle said. She reports directly to the cul-

tural affairs directorate of the City of Paris. Particularly important, she believes, is the city's perception of the museum, which is formed directly by the people who attend the shows and indirectly through the way the museum is reflected in the press. This particular evening, a politician was to do the speaking, but Join-Diéterle had written the comments for editing by his staff. She would be there, circulating.

I left at 6:15 p.m., so that she could change into an elegant garment of her own for the 6:30 reception.

THE TWO FACES OF MANAGING

Two very different days! For two very different organizations, managed by people with two very different styles.

One organization runs around the world dealing with crises on an intermittent basis. It goes where the world is sick. It tries to cure, or palliate, and then it leaves. The other organization stays put, and collects heirlooms, which it may keep forever.

Management follows suit as shown in Table 1—in one case dramatic, aggressive, intrusive; in the other, careful, nurturing, infusive. One is yang, about short-term penetration; the other is yin, about long-term engrossment.

Indeed, all this works rather nicely even as metaphors. MSF is not just *about* medicine but *like* medicine. It makes its decisions decisively—to treat a crisis or to withdraw treatment from it—and it prefers the acute to the chronic, tending to leave when the condition stabilizes. Not coincidentally, its chief is a physician. He too practices management like medicine—as an interventionist cure—with words as his prescriptions.

The museum conserves both garments and a legacy. Its leader is called the chef conservateur, and her work is about image and feel. She operates with her hands on, literally as well as figuratively. Just as she selects garments by sight and feel, so too is

she "in touch" with every detail of her organization. When she talked about the intimate relationship of clothes to the body, she might well have used that as a metaphor for the relationship of the mission of her organization to its own body, namely to preserve the heritage of clothing within this carefully woven structure.

Brauman's work this day was largely external—networking and promoting, speaking out more than just speaking. Join-Diéterle work, in contrast, was largely internal—doing and detailing, by seeing and feeling. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe is reported to have said that "God is in the details." Not only in architecture, but in management too, if this day is any indication.

Of course, there is more to the symbolism of yin and yang. Yin may be absorbing, but it is said to be dark, obscure, and mysterious. Yang is said to be clear, light, and white. But maybe a little too much. And while yang is active, yin is more passive. But perhaps we can use a little more passivity in

management, to enable everyone else to be more active.

Above all, these two "great cosmic forces," we are told, cannot exist without each other. In the duality is found the unity: there has to be light in the shadows and shadow in the light. If harmony is achieved when yin and yang are balanced, then is there some rebalancing to be done in management?

The yang face of managing, the drama of MSF and the corresponding style of its leader, would seem more representative of how management is practiced today. At least, that is how the press depicts it, in stories written by journalists who need readers. The drama, not the daily routine, is what attracts and sells. But most managing is about the daily routine—about trying to establish and sustain excellence. In that respect, we need to pay more attention to the mysteries of yin. If there really are two faces of managing, then we have been neglecting one of them.

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