

# Editor's letter

- The “good jobs strategy” that drives growth, productivity and engagement
- The role of middle management in the new world of work
- Leading hybrid teams in the future knowledge workplace
- Strategic scenario planning: eight critical applications
- Managing the emerging role of generative AI
- Planning to achieve M&A deal synergies
- The urgent need to audit safety leadership

Three articles in this issue of *Strategy & Leadership* offer top corporate leadership a guide to enhancing the jobs of middle and frontline managers to fully enable them to be crucial strategic assets that drive growth, productivity and engagement. Starting with two interviews by S&L contributing editor Brian Leavy, the authors and their key insights in this issue are:

In their interview, “**Driving growth, productivity and engagement through ‘good jobs strategy,’**” Professor Leavy and noted author Zeynep Ton, a professor in the operations management group at MIT Sloan School of Management discuss her unconventional insights. Her observation: “The mindset of those who lead with good jobs is more customer-centric. In their minds if you can get everyone focused end to end on improving the value for the customer you will create value for your shareholders.”

In their interview “**Rethinking the role of middle management for the new world of work,**” McKinsey partners, Bill Schaninger, Bryan Hancock and Emily Field tell Professor Leavy “The need for a fundamental rethink of the role of middle management in today’s organizations seems now more urgent than ever.”

In their article “**Leading hybrid teams in a transition to the future knowledge workplace,**” Suffolk University professors Jodi Detjen and Sheila Simsarian Webber see an opportunity for top management to adopt a hybrid team building approach to take advantage of the changing work environment. Their model: “A framework of four steps enables the formation of the hybrid structured culture: Empower Candor, Facilitate Inclusion, Develop Boundaries and Create a Decision-Making Protocol.”

In their article, “**Strategic scenario planning in practice: eight critical applications and associated benefits,**” Lance Mortlock, EY Managing Partner Energy & Resources, and Oleksiy Osiyevskyy, Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship & Innovation, University of Calgary, “offer a novel typology and propose a more complete and holistic model of the scenario planning application and its intended outcomes.”

“Not surprisingly, our recent survey of executives found that the key barriers to the effective deployment and use of generative AI are linked to security, privacy, ethics, regulations and economics – not access to the underlying technology itself,” note IBM researchers Jacob Dencik, Brian Goehring and Anthony Marshall in their article “**Managing the emerging role of generative AI in next-generation business.**”

In their guide to successful deal making, “**M&A: The process of planning to achieve deal synergies,**” Deloitte strategists Mark L. Sirower, Chris E. Gilbert, Jeffery M. Weirens and Jacob A. VandeVanter show how the best deal makers become prepared acquirers who recognize that different deals represent different strategic intents, and how they can prioritize acquiring required capabilities within a universe of candidates.

An annual safety leadership audit should be an integral part of the governance and management systems and processes urge Russell Craig, Adjunct Professor in the Business School at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand and Joel Amernic Professor of Accounting at the Joseph L. Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto in their article, “**Auditing safety leadership: three railroad catastrophes.**” They suggest that “External financial auditors are well-placed to assess whether a company and its officers have made false and misleading statements about the effect of safety on the company’s profitability, liquidity and financial strength in annual reports, regulatory filings and public announcements.”

In his review of *The Strategist’s Handbook* by Oxford professor Timothy Galpin, “**Can strategic planning adapt to an era that requires enhanced reactive capability?**” S&L contributing Robert J. Allio comments that “We may well be entering the post-strategic-planning era, in which we prosper by common sense, quick learning and agility.” Professor Galpin’s new book is based on research by the Oxford Strategy Insights Project, which compiled data from 167 respondents in 26 industries and 30 countries regarding their firm’s strategy planning processes.

And kudos to contributing editor Larry Goodson for his perceptive and succinct “**Quick takes**” summaries of the issue’s insights.

Good reading!

Robert M. Randall

Editor

*Strategy & Leadership*