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Away from the Top: Exploring Strategic Leadership in an Emergent Strategic Initiative Process

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Away from the Top: Exploring Strategic Leadership in an Emergent Strategic Initiative Process

ABSTRACT

Strategic leadership is essential to organizational viability and success. However, by looking only at the strategic leader of the organization, we may be missing important strategic leadership behaviors that are distributed throughout the organization. Using an in-depth instrumental case study of an emergent initiative in a healthcare institution, we find that strategic leadership behaviors permeate the organization in a dynamic manner. Our findings illustrate that in contrast to much of the extant literature, strategic leadership transpires much before individuals positioned at the apex of the organization formalize and implement the final initiative top-down. More specifically, we portray strategic leadership as a distributed phenomenon that occurs throughout the emergent initiative process. In doing so, our findings extend the current, predominately leader-centric, understanding of strategic leadership.

Keywords:

distributed leadership; process; strategic leadership

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Strategic leadership is essential for long-term organizational viability and success.

Organizational scholars have been intrigued by strategic leaders and drawn toward understanding how those extraordinary individuals drive their organizations to success (Boal & Hooijberg, 2000; Hambrick & Mason, 1987). To this end, previous research has conceptualized strategic leaders as extraordinary individuals who work to envision, plan, and execute strategy—carefully crafting and creating the future of the organization (Ireland & Hitt, 1999; Rowe, 2001; Waldman, Ramírez, House, & Puranam, 2001). In this view, the vision of the chief executive and the top management team (TMT) plays a critical role in strategic planning and organizational viability (Sosik, Jung, Berson, Dionne & Jaussi, 2005; Taylor, 1995; Wilson, 1992). Yet, is it practical that the entire strategy of a firm—from its formulation to execution—rests on the shoulders of a single individual? Said differently, is there only one individual (or small group) in the entire organization that contributes to the origination, development, and implementation of strategy?

To address this question, we utilize a case study of an emergent strategic initiative within the healthcare context. We focused on the strategic initiative because it allowed us to examine strategic leadership within a single, bounded event and thus gain richer insight into the phenomenon in question. In following the development of the strategic initiative from its inception to completion, we identify strategic leadership behaviors within each stage of the process. We find that strategic leadership occurs much before the initiative is formalized and implemented top-down: different strategic leadership behaviors dynamically shape the nature of the strategic initiative throughout the process and occur regardless of the formal positions that individuals occupy. To this end, our study contributes to research and practice in several ways. First, we challenge existing notions that promote strategic leadership as a role held by one individual, or a

small group, at the organizational apex. We offer that strategic leadership can be distributed across organizational levels in specific organizational situations. Second, the ongoing interaction of multiple individuals across organizational levels is necessary for distributed strategic leadership to shape, form, or develop strategy. Third, individuals may believe themselves to be the “strategic leader”, creating confusion as to who the leader actually is. This is a necessary part of a more distributed form of strategic leadership, as all “strategic leaders” are necessary pieces to the strategy puzzle.

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Strategic Leadership

Research on strategic leadership has traditionally focused on those at the apex of the organization. It represents a leader-centric perspective, emphasizing the leader’s characteristics, the followers’ constructions of the leader’s characteristics (Grint, 2005; Nadkarni & Herrmann, 2010; Peterson, Smith, Martorana & Owens, 2003). The most dominant paradigm is upper echelons theory, which focuses specifically on the individual or individuals positioned at the hierarchical apex of the organization (CEO and/or TMT) (Hambrick & Mason, 1984). The upper echelon approach assumes that the strategy of an organization is a reflection of the experiences, values, and personalities of individuals in the TMT (Canella & Monroe, 1997; Hambrick, 2009; Hambrick & Mason, 1984). As such, upper echelon theory focuses predominately on demographic variables of leaders (Jensen & Zajac, 2004) and composition of TMTs (Carpenter, Geletkanycz & Sanders, 2004) as influential to organizational strategy and performance. For example, personality and charisma approaches are used to predict behaviors and outcomes of leaders and the organization (Nadkarni & Herrmann, 2010; Papadakis & Barwise, 2002; Waldman et al., 2001).

Distributed Leadership Perspectives

An alternative view, and one that has gained prominence in leadership research, is of leadership as a distributed or plural phenomenon (Denis, Langley, & Sergi, 2012). From this perspective, leadership is seen as a process that occurs in relation between members in an organization (Ireland & Hitt, 1999; Rowe, 2001). Distributed leadership occurs when leadership is “handed over between people from one hierarchical level to another over time as well as across intra-organizational and inter-organizational boundaries” (Denis et al., 2012: 213). Distributed leadership focuses less on the roles held by individuals in formal leadership positions and more on the leadership functions performed by varying individuals over time (Denis et al., 2012; Gibb, 1954).

Though research on distributed leadership is more dominant in studies on education and collaboration (Buchanan, Addicott, Fitzgerald, Ferlie & [Baeza, 2007](#); [Spillane, 2006](#)), the idea that individuals at varying hierarchical levels in the organization influence strategy and its related processes is not new. Research by Floyd and Wooldridge (2000) as well as Shi and colleagues (2009) emphasize the behaviors of middle managers in influencing organizational strategy. According to this literature, actions of middle managers—from championing strategic alternatives and facilitating adaptability, to synthesizing information and implementing strategy—are critical for strategy development in organizations (Floyd & Wooldridge, 2000; Shi et al., 2009). From this view, there is potential for individuals outside of the organizational apex to act as strategic leaders in specific organizational situations.

A distributed leadership view identifies strategic leadership as a behavior, rather than a position, and a shared role responsibility of members throughout the organization (Ireland & Hitt, 1999; Rowe, 2001). Moving away from leader-centric perspectives, Ireland and Hitt (2005: 63) define strategic leadership as the ability of organizational members to “anticipate, envision,

maintain flexibility, think strategically, and work with others to initiate changes that will create a viable future for the organization.” From this perspective, strategic leadership can describe the behaviors of any individual in the organization. Thus, we borrow from Ireland and Hitt to conceptualize strategic leadership as a set of behaviors that can potentially permeate the organization and reside at levels across the organizational hierarchy.

METHODS

Research Site

The site for our research is a medical institution, “Environ,” located in the US Midwest. Environ is part of a large public university system, and offers educational and medical services throughout the state. It offers a variety of educational services, such as degrees, training programs, and specialized areas of research. It also provides essential and auxiliary medical services to local communities. Five departments operate under a general administration office with a single top leader. Over 60 faculty members are dispersed across these five departments and are responsible for instructing and guiding the dental education and service programs provided by Environ. Environ is an appropriate context for our study because, as indicated by Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991), decision-making in educational settings is often autonomous, leading to the ability of multiple individuals across organizational levels to contribute to strategic processes and initiatives (see also Shirley, 1983).

Consistent with the purpose of our study, we focused on the major strategic initiative occurring in Environ at the time: the broadening of education and outreach services across the state. This strategic initiative involved transforming the way services were being offered and the way education was being delivered from an onsite education delivery system to a remote delivery system. Traditionally, education and dental services were delivered on the premises.

With increasing external pressures due to difficulty getting dentists to locate in rural areas and lack of resources to treat patients in these communities, the state and Environ were facing increasing challenges regarding how it was going to meet these needs. We focused our analysis to this particular initiative because it (a) was strategic to the organization so that strategic leadership would in fact be exhibited and (b) was processual or complex so that multiple individuals were involved.

Data Collection

To examine distributed strategic leadership behaviors within the context of this strategic initiative we used a combination of data collection methods, including interviews, and analysis of archival data (e.g., news articles and other publicly-available information and internal documents provided by participants). Our data collection spanned three stages. First, we used a purposive sampling technique to identify a key informant for interviews ([Creswell, 2003](#)). Key informants are individuals with whom the researcher begins in data collection because they are well informed and accessible, and can provide leads to additional informants and information ([Creswell, 2003](#); [Gilchrist, 1992](#)). In the second stage, we interviewed five individuals that were identified by our key informant as critical in the development of the strategic initiative. In these interviews we learned of six more individuals who we subsequently interviewed leading to total of 12 interviews. This number is relatively typical of a strategy process, in which limited members of an organization are involved in strategic planning or implementation (see similar sample sizes per organization from Eisenhardt, 1989b and Hodgkinson & Wright, 2002).

In the third stage of our data collection, we gathered internal and external archival data. Internal archival data were collected from participants through solicitation of internal documents and records regarding the strategic initiative. External archival data were collected from external

sources in the form of newspaper and other articles appearing in the mass media and community newspapers. This resulted in 171 pages of archival data that were included in coding.

Interviews. Interviews were conducted one-on-one with participants in their offices and lasted approximately one hour. Interviews were based on a semi-structured interview protocol with 11 core questions (see Appendix A). Two interviewers conducted each interview to reduce interviewer bias ([Frey & Fontana, 1991](#)). Interviews were designed to gather background information on the institution as well as detailed information regarding the strategic initiative. In the interview process individuals were asked to (a) describe the strategic initiative; (b) indicate how and why it originated; (c) report the process through which it developed; and (d) reflect on the overall results of the initiative. Informants were also asked to identify crucial behaviors at each stage of the initiative's development. To gain the most complete information, we employed primarily open-ended questions with prompts when informants' answers were brief or when novel aspects emerged ([Creswell, 2003](#); [Strauss & Corbin, 1998](#)). At the end of these interviews, informants were asked to identify all other principal and peripheral individuals who were involved in the strategic initiative from the beginning to the present. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed for coding.

Archival data. Archival data were helpful in establishing a strategic initiative timeline, as well as providing additional evidence for the emergent themes. Newspaper articles that reported on the strategic initiative provided additional insight into the organizational context as well as the environmental triggers of the strategic initiative. The articles further confirmed that we had interviewed all the key informants associated with the initiative. In addition to the articles, strategic documentation provided to us by informants allowed us to gain insight into the formalization aspect of the strategic initiative, as well as identify how the strategic initiative was

shaped from its origination to its institutionalization. Indirectly, archival documentation provided insight into the leadership activities involved in the initiative development, especially at the formalization stage.

Informant bias. To address potential informant bias ([Creswell, 2003; Eisenhardt, 1989a](#)), we triangulated data across multiple informants, multiple levels of the organization, and archival sources (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Miller, 2000). We also used open-ended questioning to give expert status to the participants in the research process and allow for disconfirming or negative evidence (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Finally, we limited our questions to the most important events in order to improve accuracy of the information (Eisenhardt, 1989a; Koriat & Goldsmith, 1996). Given that some of the questions were directed toward a historical perspective of initiative development, we used “courtroom questioning” and focused primarily on accounts of informants’ actions and observations, thus accounting for potential recollection bias ([Eisenhardt, 1989a](#); Huber & Power, 1985).

Data Analysis

We used inductive thematic analysis of interview and archival data in order to investigate distributed strategic leadership behaviors within the context of the emergent strategic initiative ([Corbin & Strauss, 1990](#); Creswell, Hanson, Plano-Clark, & Morales, 2007). We adopted a categorical aggregation approach to data analysis ([Creswell et al., 2007; Stake, 1995](#)) identifying a collection of instances from the data and allowing the higher order themes to emerge. Our analysis consisted of several stages. In the first stage, we immersed ourselves in the details of the case through multiple readings of the interview and archival data ([Agar, 1980](#)). This stage is important as it allows us to gain rich insight into the contextual particularities of Environ as well as to build understanding with regards to the leadership practices within. In the second stage, two

of the co-authors did an initial coding of the interviews after which three co-authors shared and discussed the codes, and how these codes fit or challenged existing strategic leadership research. At this stage, we identified classification of strategic leadership behaviors by Ireland and Hitt (2005) particularly useful. In the third stage, two of the co-authors recoded all interview and archival data using MAXQDA.

Because leadership behaviors within each stage of the process were recognized as crucial, we focused our analysis on identifying particular leadership behaviors as put forth by Ireland and Hitt (2005): anticipating, envisioning, working with others to initiate change, maintaining flexibility, and thinking strategically within each stage of the initiative emergence. Furthermore, because the process of strategic initiative emergence was essential to understanding distributed strategic leadership in Environ, we focused on identifying each stage and sub-stage of the process. At this stage, we identified 29 individual codes.

In the third stage, we grouped the 29 codes into 10 first-order codes that illustrated strategic leadership behaviors as embedded within the strategic initiative process (Creswell, 2003; Wolcott, 1994). Following recommendations of [Creswell \(2003\)](#), data analyses proceeded iteratively between theory and data. To this end, prior research in the realm of strategic leadership was especially beneficial in helping us refine the logic of the emergent themes ([Creswell, 2003](#); [Eisenhardt, 1989a](#)). This process allowed for a final interpretation that is grounded both in our data as well as in the literature ([Wolcott, 1994](#)).

FINDINGS

Environ is a very successful, nationally-ranked, dental institution with exceptional service and education. Part of Environ's success is certainly due to its top leadership and exceptional dental expertise. However, its success also resides in the everyday actions and interactions of

leaders distributed throughout the multiple departments and administrative offices in the organization. In particular, Environ's success may be evidenced in its ability to not just dynamically adapt to the complex environment in which its operates, but also to capitalize on the evolving changes. This dynamic adjustment is enabled through strategic leadership behaviors that are, rather than solely concentrated on the top, broadly distributed throughout the organization.

We found evidence of five strategic leadership behaviors throughout the emergent strategic initiative process as it flowed across organizational levels. In Table 1 we report findings for each of the most salient strategic leadership behaviors and the related organizational mechanisms that enabled distributed strategic leadership throughout the emergent strategy initiative process. We expand upon our findings in the subsections below.

Insert Table 1 about here

It is important to emphasize here that the emergent themes identified in this study should not be understood as all-inclusive or somehow independent from one another. We acknowledge that the linear discussion of the emergent themes may imply their full separation or straightforward linear progression. However, we chose to present our findings as such for the purpose of linguistic clarity. The ongoing interplay of distributed actions within the loosely coupled stages presented below should be kept in mind. Only by considering these themes as interrelated and fully dynamic, rather than causal and linear, can the nature of distributed strategic leadership be fully comprehended.

Anticipating through Triggers

We found anticipation to be the most salient strategic leadership behavior occurring as the strategic initiative originated at Environ. Triggers were important in this stage of the emergent strategic initiative process because triggers helped strategic leaders anticipate how environmental changes could create opportunities for Environ. Evidence for anticipation associated with triggers in the originating stage is provided in Table 1. Triggers arise from conditions that motivate organizational actors to anticipate alternative possibilities for their own actions, as well as for the organization ([Goldspink & Kay, 2004](#)). Several participants, when discussing the origination of the strategic initiative process, provided evidence of triggers that helped strategic leaders anticipate the initiation of the process. One faculty member described a trigger as follows:

“So dental education is very, very expensive consequently and a lot of dental schools are looking at new ways of trying to finance that because obviously can only raise tuition so much and states schools are only going to budget so much for you. And so how can you really get creative about these things? Well, you know some of the dental schools decided that they might be able to do more of this kind of community and service learning types of things if they go out to the public health clinics in the state.”

As the emergent strategic initiative was originating, the environment in which Environ operated started to change. This provided emergent opportunities for the development of new strategic initiatives. As indicated by Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991: 433), “strategic change involves an attempt to change current modes of cognition and action to enable the organization to take advantage of important opportunities.” The environment did not cause change in Environ. Rather, environmental changes instigated triggers that influenced organizational change in a way that is reflective of the environment (Gemmill & Smith, 1985). These triggers corresponded with needs at Environ that were not being met by the current structure and strategy. Strategic leaders

anticipated how Environ could fill these needs. One administrator spoke of the problems that Environ would face if it did not react to the changing environment:

“...the model for dental education is that you have to find ways to be as creative as you can. If...you just have a dental clinic in a dental school, and that’s your total revenue cash flow, and that’s your total educational experience, in a place like this...it’s a path of destruction, because, eventually it’s going to fail.”

The interplay of various triggers as presented by the changing environment, including the availability of federal grants and the need for dental professionals in rural areas, helped originate the emergence of the strategic initiative. However, the ability of strategic leaders to anticipate these changes and how Environ could capitalize on the opportunities created by these changes was the driving force in this stage of the process.

Envisioning in the Local-Historical Context

Envisioning by distributed strategic leaders in the organization became elemental to the framing of the strategic initiative process. It is crucial for distributed strategic leaders to be sensitive to and recognize emergent opportunities ([Lichtenstein & Mendenhall, 2002](#)). As such, envisioning involves a leader’s directing or re-directing of the organization to a more desirable future through novel or innovative strategic processes. Distributed strategic leaders in the organization demonstrated this by recognizing emergence of opportunities within the environment that could be incorporated based on the local-historical context of Environ. As stated by a staff member:

“I know there’s always been this talk and these undercurrents of...this population that’s not being seen. And... how all of a sudden, that became...our goal...I suppose just because...that’s a population that’s being seen in these clinics.”

Whereas triggers provided the conditions for the strategic initiative to originate, the local-historical context both constrained and enabled the emergence of a viable strategic initiative at

Environ. Environ was not a large organization, so the local-historical context permeated the organization. Given the local-historical context, the ability of strategic leaders to envision the future of Environ was necessary so that the emergent strategic initiative could be framed accordingly. We relate envisioning and local-historical context to the framing phase of the emergent strategic initiative process in Table 1.

Local-historical context can develop “as much from evolutionary change in response to the environment as from revolutionary action based on managerial vision” (DiBella, 1995: 287). Individuals in the organization envisioned the strategic initiative process based on the local-historical context of the organization, with the help of anticipation of triggers from the strategic initiative’s origination. These individuals envisioned that the strategic initiative would “expand out service learning in clinics where we have a better control of the educational process”, as suggested by a faculty member. One faculty member extensively envisioned how education and outreach services could be broadened across the state:

“So next year will be four weeks and then the year after will be five weeks and then we go to six weeks. So though actually, you know, we spend a significant portion of the training experience ‘in the real world’ and I think that has really been sort of the driving force, as we really want to move dental education out of sort of the laboratory or controlled environment experience and then move it into the real world because otherwise our students or residents get out in the real world and they are like, ‘Oh! You know, I have not had to deal with this,’ or ‘Oh! This is here, I don’t, you know, this patient isn’t meeting, this, this, and this criteria.’”

Networking the Change to Build Momentum

Strategic leaders across the organizational hierarchy networked the change to build momentum to break down barriers and mold the strategic initiative to fit the current and desired future state of Environ. As evidenced in Table 1, networking the change was an increasingly important strategic leadership behavior as momentum was built and the emergent strategic

initiative process developed. Distributed strategic leaders interacted and linked up during the development of the emergent strategic initiative process by amplifying “networking skills [to] build support both vertically and horizontally” (Schaafsma, 1997: 43) at Environ. Many of the participants commented on the importance of interacting with others across the organization and expanding their networking skills to further develop and create a viable future for Environ.

During this stage, informants commented on how they engaged in a particular action that helped develop the strategic initiative process. For example, one administrator discussed their unique ability in the process:

“My role was to bring the vision, and then my role was to find the players that could help execute the vision...I mean, just to get the ball rolling, and sorta have the passion for it too.”

A faculty member spoke of the importance of networking the change as necessary to build momentum for the strategic initiative process to emerge:

“I think it is really important to have a small group of advocates who can clearly articulate what the idea and the concept is and even try to stay true to what you are trying to accomplish.”

All participants noted the importance of the relational, rather than the bureaucratic, side of the organization. Championing ([Dutton & Ashford, 1993](#); [Ginsberg & Abrahamson, 1991](#)), functioning formal and informal committees ([Dutton, 1986](#)), and internal partnerships ([Ginsberg & Abrahamson, 1991](#); [Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007](#)) were all instrumental in enabling distributed strategic leadership. Networking the change involved identification of new ideas, mobilization resources around these ideas, and information sharing with others about the idea and its potential to contribute to the strategy of the organization ([Dutton, Ashford, O’Neill, Hayes, & Wierba, 1997](#)). At this point, it became clear that the emergence of the strategic initiative as a process was bigger than one person alone. It required many strategic leaders

distributed across varying levels of the organization to network the change necessary to create a viable future for Environ.

Distributed strategic leaders at lower, middle, and upper levels of Environ interacted to build momentum within the contextual boundaries of the organization to develop the strategic initiative. They did so by individually or collectively removing obstacles and creating small wins. Removing obstacles and creating small wins are evident across conceptualizations of effective leadership in directing organizational behaviors (Reay, Golden-Biddle, & Germann, 2006; Weick, 1984). Within Environ, effective distributed strategic leaders did this by networking with others. The joint force of individuals linking up was instrumental in building momentum for the emergent strategic initiative process.

Maintaining Flexibility to Resource the Change

Once the change had developed through the combined efforts and interactions of distributed strategic leaders to remove obstacles and create small wins, it was essential that individuals vested in the emergence of the strategic initiative sponsor the initiative by providing resources to give it life (Boal, Whitehead, Phillips, & [Hunt, 1992](#); [House & Aditya, 1997](#)). Thus, in the experimentation phase, sponsors were needed to resource the change—in terms of decision-making, allocation of resources, and formulation of organizational goals and strategy ([House & Aditya, 1997](#)). These “sponsor behaviors” of distributed strategic leaders in essence maintained flexibility for the leader and the organization as the strategic initiative was experimented as part of Environ’s strategy. We highlight the pairing of maintaining flexibility as a necessary distributed strategic leadership behavior to resource the change during the experimentation phase of the emergent strategic initiative process in Table 1.

Organizations with few commitments or little path dependency can “focus [resources on] several scenarios, thus maintaining flexibility” ([Wernerfelt & Karnani, 1987: 187](#)). Distributed strategic leaders maintained flexibility in both the resources allocated and decisions made to experiment with the emergence of the strategic initiative in a way that would ensure future viability for Environ. As stated by one faculty member: “You know, even we have to be very strategic or give up something in order to fit in these other things.”

The idea of experimenting forced the distributed strategic leaders at Environ to maintain enough flexibility so the strategic initiative could emerge in a way that fit the current and future states of Environ. One administrator noted how the organization dealt with a lack of resources: “We can’t send all of our students to one place, we don’t have the resources and time, we can’t accommodate them all.” Given these resource constraints, it was important for distributed strategic leaders to maintain flexibility so that if the strategic initiative did not succeed, there were other viable paths for Environ’s future. As identified by one faculty member:

“...this is on a trial basis...we are going near the four weeks and then the five weeks, and it is very contingent upon a lot of different things being accomplished. If these things are done, then we will continue proceeding, so the deal still isn’t totally closed...”

An administrator believed maintaining flexibility while experimenting around resourcing the change was necessary to the future viability of Environ. This distributed strategic leader recognized that at some point in the process money was not the resource needed to keep the process alive. Thus, figuring out which resources were needed and when was an invaluable part of maintaining flexibility:

“So now our challenge is, this, the federal government...the dental associations, nobody wants to pump a whole lot of money back into dentistry to produce an oversupply... The better thing is to target, you know, distribute your dentists in the right locations.”

Thinking Strategically to Capture the Strategic Initiative

We found that strategic leaders at the apex of the organization were prominent in thinking strategically, capturing the emergence of this initiative, and formalizing the emergent strategic initiative at Environ. These strategic leaders of the organization also, in some instances, participated in the other stages of the process to varying degrees. Yet, it was solely up to these individuals at the organizational apex to capture the strategic initiative and formalize it into the strategic plan at Environ. Our data show that strategic leaders at the organizational apex capture information arising within the organization through both formal and informal sources (Shrivastava & Nachman, 1989), which resulted in the formalizing of the strategic initiative into Environ's strategic plan. We provide evidence for thinking strategically to capture the initiative as related to the formalizing stage of the emergent strategic initiative process in Table 1.

Strategic leaders engage in strategic thinking throughout the process as “an intellectual exercise in exploring what is likely to happen...strategic thinking is using analogies and qualitative similarities to develop creative new ideas” (Stacey, 1992: 105). Although thinking strategically was heavily influential throughout the strategic initiative process, it became extremely important to capture the strategic initiative and formalize it into the strategic plan at Environ. We find evidence that strategic leaders of Environ engaged in strategic thinking, synthesizing where the organization currently is, where it hopes to be, and the fit of the emergent strategic initiative between these two. One administrator positioned at the apex of the organization discussed the strategic initiative process as something that emerged within the organization before it finally came to be an initiative that could be formalized as part of the strategic plan at Environ:

“I look back at it and see these individuals who championed this being very opportunistic and putting together, you know, opportunities, in terms of grants and... taking advantage of the environmental factors that are coming into play. And, having the vision to look at that and say this is where we need to go.”

Distributed strategic leadership processes in the organization helped to originate, frame, develop, and experiment with the strategic initiative at Environ. However, these four stages alone were not enough for the strategic initiative to become formalized at the organization. It was also necessary to capture the strategic initiative and integrate it into the overall strategic plan at Environ. It was important that strategic leaders at the apex of the organization recognize the emergence of the strategic initiative process, guided by the distributed actions and interactions of individuals throughout the organization, and fit it into Environ's strategic plan.

Summary

We provide an illustrative depiction of this process accompanied by the means necessary to drive the process, and the most salient strategic leadership behaviors at each phase, in Figure 1. Though we graphically present this process in a linear and simplistic manner, we reiterate that distributed strategic leadership within an emergent strategic initiative process is complex, nonlinear, and dynamic. The emergence of different salient distributed strategic leadership behaviors at each phase demonstrates the dynamism of the process. While some distributed strategic leadership behaviors were more salient than others at each stage of the emergent strategic initiative process, all distributed strategic leadership behaviors were evident throughout the process. Table 2 illustrates this phenomenon.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Insert Table 2 about here

Our findings are in line with distributed perspectives of leadership in which leadership is “the combined influence of multiple leaders in specific organizational situations” (Denis et al, 2012: 211). We find individuals across the organizational hierarchy exhibit strategic leadership behaviors in the specific organizational situation of an emergent strategic initiative process. Further, we find distributed strategic leadership to occur in the presence of certain organizational mechanisms including triggers, local-historical context, momentum building, resources for change, and capturing practices.

While our study highlighted a single, objective timeline of the process over the course of several decades and supported by the archival data, our participants reported multiple individual timelines. These timelines reflected their own lived experiences and socially constructed realities of their own roles as strategic leaders. All informants recognized the part others played, but when it came to identifying the key players in the initiative, key informants repeatedly mentioned themselves as the person responsible for the initiative above all others. In so doing, they positioned themselves as the essential strategic leader responsible for the formation or recognition of opportunities for this new initiative. This phenomenon was so striking that it emerged as a stand-alone finding in our data. We report this next, and refer to it as the I did it effect.

The *I Did It* Effect: The Distributed Nature of Strategic Leadership

Multiple individuals perceived themselves as the instrumental force in advancing the strategic initiative, or as one informant succinctly but powerfully stated: “I did it.” For example, one faculty member highlighted their own actions as integral to the initiation of partnerships in service learning: “I said to the director, ‘Would you consider contracting with the dental school

to run your dental clinic?” Another faculty member identified their own actions as the instrumental force in developing the strategic initiative:

“So I sent out a letter, explaining what I wanted to do. And then a return card. So if anyone returns the card, they’ve obviously got some interest. And so then, I follow up on that, and explain the program.”

Yet an administrator, who came into the initiative much later in the process, identified the initiative as due to his actions:

“The passion came from me and people around me that they realized ‘I’m the new guy, there’s change here, this is somethin’ we can jump on.’”

In other words, many informants believed they played a large, or perhaps the largest, role as the strategic leader in the strategic initiative. We provide evidence of this phenomenon in Table 3. Regardless of the level of involvement, most all informants were eager to claim the essence of the strategic initiative as their own idea, as exemplified by one administrator: “And so...this is something that was of interest to me to make sure that we did reach out into those areas. I could see that coming, and knew this was important.”

Insert Table 3 about here

There are several important considerations stemming from this finding. This finding highlights the significance of multiple leadership initiatives linking up to contribute to emergence processes. The I did it effect illustrates how multiple local pockets of actions and interactions at various stages of the initiative were critical in generating emergence events that ultimately produced the formalized strategic initiative at Environ. Literature using complexity theory was especially helpful in trying to understand the existence of individual spheres of

action, their bounded understanding, and how this particular condition enables emergence to occur (Cilliers, 1998; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). In describing behavior in complex systems, such as Environ, Cilliers (1998: 5) explains:

“Each element [agent] in the system is ignorant of the behavior of the system as a whole, it responds only to information that is available to it locally...If each element ‘knew’ what was happening to the system as a whole, all of the complexity would have to be present in that element.”

Thus, agents can only absorb information that is locally available and construct solutions based on that information. As these agents—in this case individual strategic leaders—construct localized solutions, they start changing the nature of the networks as well as influencing behaviors of others through interactions. These localized solutions link up, extending to multiple networks within the organization in ways that foster conditions for emergence to occur (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). This process of absorption of local information was essential to the emergence of the strategic initiative process at Environ, and explains why so many informants, when asked about the most influential persons within the organization in driving the strategic initiative process, essentially said, “I did it.”

DISCUSSION

Our findings suggest that traditional, leader-centric views of strategic leadership are not wrong, but incomplete. Distributed strategic leadership is necessary in specific organizational situations. We find the emergence of a strategic initiative to be one of those situations. Strategic initiatives originate in distributed individuals’ actions and interactions that combine together and then “bubble-up” to the top where they are captured by top managers and institutionalized into the formal strategic plan. In viewing strategic leadership only as leader-centric, strategic leadership theory and research is missing the rich backdrop of distributed leadership behaviors.

Theoretical Implications

First, we challenge existing notions that promote strategic leadership as a role held by one individual, or a small group, at the organizational apex. We offer that strategic leadership can be a set of distributed behaviors occurring in an organizational situation, such as an emergent process. All of this points to the need to build greater construct clarity around what we mean by strategic leadership (Suddaby, 2010). Given support in our study for the view presented by Ireland and Hitt (1999, 2005), we suggest their definition as a starting point for this effort. The great groups view of strategic leadership presented by Ireland and Hitt (1999: 46) depicts strategic leadership as “distributed among diverse individuals who share the responsibility to create a viable future for their firm.” From this perspective, strategic leadership occurs when diverse individuals work between and within their own groups to create innovative solutions and propel strategic change. Our findings support this view by showing that it was a diverse group of individuals who came together at differing times, and across various stages, to generate emergence of the strategic initiative.

Second, the ongoing interaction of multiple individuals across organizational levels is necessary for distributed strategic leadership to shape, form, or develop strategy. Distributed strategic leadership requires strategic behaviors of individuals. Distributed strategic leadership differs from other distributed forms of leadership in that distributed strategic leadership involves strategic behaviors: anticipating, envisioning, networking change, maintaining flexibility, and thinking strategically. Our study proposes that distributed strategic leadership is the driving force behind the emergence of the strategic initiative at Environ. Distributed strategic leadership was the force behind many years of groundwork that enabled the initiative to take hold and bubble up to the top. These distributed leaders were essential to the success of the “cross-boundary project” (Denis et al., 2012) that evolved over time. A more distributed view of strategic leadership

suggests that leadership is “relayed between people to achieve outcomes” (Denis et al., 2012: 215). Thus, in organizational situations that require contributions from multiple individuals spanning the organizational hierarchy, such as strategic initiatives, distributed strategic leadership thrives. The combined individual actions and interactions contribute not just to the strategic initiative, but also to the organization’s strategy (Jarzabkowski, Balogun, & Seidl, 2007).

Third, individuals may believe themselves to be the “strategic leader”, creating confusion as to who actually is the leader. This is a necessary part of distributed strategic leadership, as all individuals that act as “strategic leaders” in organizations are necessary pieces to the “strategy puzzle”. These dispersed individuals each contribute in their own way. Even more interestingly, each identified their own behaviors and actions as the core component without which the strategic initiative would not have emerged—as evidenced in our finding: I did it. Individuals were justified in saying their behaviors were central to the emergence of the initiative. It was only through the actions of multiple actors responding to localized pressures across various periods of time that the initiative emerged and scaled. A key theoretical implication is that distributed leadership behaviors by individuals throughout the organization’s hierarchy reflect everyone’s responsibility in the strategic initiative.

Practical Implications

This study holds important implications for practice. Leaders in organizations should recognize that strategic leadership is not a position held by individuals only at the top of the organization (and flowing top-down). While the actions of strategic leaders of the organization certainly are important, they may be only one part in a larger process that proceeds distributed strategic leadership. If anything, our study suggests that the interaction of those leaders at the top of the organization with distributed

leaders across the organization is essential to facilitating emergence of initiatives that ultimately become important strategies for the organization. Leaders positioned at the apex of the organization need to support the individual actions and interactions of individuals across the organizational hierarchy so that strategic change triggered by environmental demands can arise.

A related implication of our research is that strategic leaders positioned at the apex of the organization should be more cognizant of the “bubbling up” and capturing processes through which strategy emerges. An important element of the strategic initiative process is the ability of strategic leaders of the organization to recognize how ideas, processes, or practices can emerge at varying levels of the organization. However, it appears it is not enough for those at the apex of the organization to simply allow this emergence; they also need to take an active role in capturing the ideas, processes, or practices that fit, complement, or extend the organization’s vision, mission, and values. Thus, the process of capturing for strategic leaders of the organization is two-fold. First, managers should enable pockets of individuals within the organization to interact so that these ideas, processes, and practices can bubble up. Second, these managers should improve their awareness of the emergence of these ideas, processes, and practices and evaluate how these emergent initiatives may fit, transform, or revolutionize the existing strategy in a way that complements the vision and mission of the organization.

Distributed strategic leadership can create tension between the actions of distributed leaders in the organization with those positioned at the hierarchical apex. Distributed strategic leaders may doubt the hierarchical leader’s abilities to handle or formalize change. As a result, distributed strategic leaders may look to other avenues to fuel their interest in working towards cross-boundary projects. Hence, because distributed strategic leadership plays a key role in specific organizational situations, such as the emergence and evolution of strategic initiatives

necessary for the organization's viability, it is essential for those in the process—and particularly formal leaders at the apex—to understand and recognize that actions and interactions of many distributed strategic leaders in the process. Thus, individuals can express I did it while noting that their actions alone, although important, may not be sufficient to carry the entire process from initiation to formalization.

Limitations and Future Research

Though we provide evidence of distributed strategic leadership, our study has limitations that can be addressed by future research. Currently, scholars writing on leader-centric approaches to strategic leadership equate the TMT with strategic leadership. But not all behaviors of the TMT are strategic, and not all strategic leadership occurs at the top. For strategic leadership research to advance we need to sort out the behaviors at the top that are strategic leadership and those that are not. Similarly, not all distributed leadership behaviors are strategic (some may be supportive, others innovative, etc.). We need further investigation of strategic leadership behaviors from a processual perspective. This means we need to study the processes that link behaviors and interactions of strategic leaders at the organizational apex with distributed strategic leaders.

We use an in-depth case study in one organization to explore in detail both the nature of distributed strategic leadership. Future research should build on this study by employing a multiple case study format that explores differing organizations in differing internal and external environments. Research along this path might ask: does distributed strategic leadership differ depending on the dynamism of the environment? This and other research questions could connect our findings with other paths of inquiry for strategic leadership research. While we believe this research lays groundwork upon which future studies could build, we do not suggest that this study provides a complete understanding of distributed strategic leadership in organizations.

While our findings identified multiple individuals who acted as distributed strategic leaders, they also showed that there were others who chose not to engage in these behaviors. A question we were not able to answer in our research is: What explains why some individuals did (and some did not) engage in distributed strategic leadership behaviors? Can we identify individual differences associated with why individuals choose to engage or not engage in distributed strategic leadership? Our data clearly showed that pressures and timing play a key role in the emergent strategy process. Is it that individuals who act as strategic leaders respond differently to pressures than others—i.e., do distributed strategic leaders have a more innate sense of timing than those who do not engage in distributed strategic leadership? Moreover, what role do organizational climate and structure play in enabling or inhibiting distributed strategic leaders? These are important questions because they have key implications for organizations trying to foster more effective strategic leadership across the organization.

CONCLUSION

Our research indicates that strategic leadership is more than just the behaviors or actions of one, or a small group, of individuals at the organization's apex. Our findings uncover a process in which distributed strategic leadership behaviors of individuals throughout the organization and across organizational levels contribute to the organization's future viability. We believe the distributed nature of strategic leadership evidenced in our study allows us to gain a more holistic understanding of what strategic leadership is in organizations and their related processes. Overall, our findings indicate that understanding the actions and interactions of multiple individuals across the organizational hierarchy over time gives impotence for greater understanding of the importance of distributed strategic leadership to organizational viability.

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TABLE 1
Description of strategic leadership behaviors and associated organizational mechanisms evidenced in each stage of the emergent strategic initiative

Strategic Leadership Behavior	Definition	Stage	Description	Mechanism that Enabled the Stage in the Strategic Initiative Process	Quote
Anticipating	“Look ahead and prepare for the future based on trends [seen] in the environment today” (Daft, 2008: 404)	Originating the Strategic Initiative	The initial phase of the emergent strategic initiative that gave rise to the process.	Triggers	“I think the... growing perception on the college’s part of the need within the state... the drain in terms of the dental providers available in the state, the movement of providers in the state to redistribute towards the major metropolitan areas, leaving some of the rural areas void of any dental support. So they saw that as an opportunity to provide support back into those areas.”
Envisioning	“[to visualize] possibilities and develop plans for bringing those possibilities about” (Taylor, Pham, Rivkin, and Armor, 1998: 6)	Framing the Strategic Initiative	The phase in the process, following the originating phase, in which the emergent strategic initiative was novel, yet still fit within the context and current organizational structure.	Local-Historical Context	“It started out by sending students out for 3 days.And then it evolved over time to not only the business part, but also the patient management part, the records part, the insurance part, the billing, all of that... finally it evolved, the last stages was they were able to go treat patients and, that’s one of the requirements now is that they can... actually treat patients and then, see how the whole system operates together.”
Working with others to initiate change (Networking the Change)	“Managing strategic change by shaping networks and coalitions down, across, up, and outside the manager’s unit”	Developing the Strategic Initiative	The phase in the process following the framing phase in which obstacle removal and creating small wins was necessary to facilitate the emergent strategic initiative.	Momentum Building	“There’s enormous resistance to that, so I’ve been working with the curriculum community and with faculty for a good part of the past two years...” “We had an opportunity to negotiate with the dental Medicaid Program

<p>(Tushman and O'Reilly, 2002: 225)</p>	<p>with the state that they would pay us a reimbursement rate that is a little bit higher than normal.”</p>	
<p>Maintaining Flexibility</p> <p>“Spreading resources over several scenarios or possibilities” (Wernerfelt and Karnani, 1987: 187)</p>	<p>Resources for Change</p> <p>The phase following the developing phase in which decisions were made and resources were allocated to ensure that, if viable, the emergent strategic initiative had the resources available to further develop and succeed.</p>	<p>“Anytime you gain research money, or, grant money, you don't have all your answers. You know... now that you've got your money, you start to, in a lot of these research grants, you have to fine tune what you're gonna do with every single dollar, and you have to have that all budgeted out. You brainstorm and you come up with these ideas, and then... you throw 'em to the faculty...and those ideas weren't all perfectly written on paper, there was, 'Well, maybe this' or 'Maybe that.'”</p>
<p>Thinking Strategically</p> <p>“To discover novel, imaginative strategies which can rewrite the rules of the competitive game” (Heracleous, 1998: 485)</p>	<p>Capturing Practices</p> <p>The final phase of the process in which the emergent strategic initiative was captured and integrated into the organization's formal strategic plan.</p>	<p>“Our mission and some vision which we write out, and then our strategic plan. That's really the map that kinda pushes us each year to where we wanna goAnd so, in that regard, I think the strategic plan has been an important planning ... document and one that gives us the impetus to go out and do things, that people think we should do. And, you know, that, it also gives us a forum for... people that wanna convince the leaders of the college, that we should do things, it gives 'em a forum to open that issue for discussion.”</p>

TABLE 2
Strategic leadership behaviors in the stages of the strategic initiative process

	Originating the Strategic Initiative	Framing the Strategic Initiative	Developing the Strategic Initiative	Experimenting with the Strategic Initiative	Formalizing the Strategic Initiative
Thinking Strategically	<p>Within the college it was, it was an easy thing to do, because basically the way I built it was that we were gonna do it during the break. And the students didn't mind. So they did their three week rotations during the summer break. And, and so they didn't miss any class or clinic time, so the faculty didn't care.</p>	<p>This push started when I was kind of in...my short honeymoon period at first. People were ready for new ideas and tried new things and so forth. So I think I kinda took advantage of the fact that I had a little freedom at first.</p>	<p>I would say the factors were the need was great, the passion came from me and people around me... they realized I'm the new guy, there's change here, let's, this is something we can jump on.</p>	<p>Any time you have a change in the curriculum, and that's what this was, you have to, you have to be able to champion it, in such a way that you can convince the faculty, the students, and staff and everybody else that this is a good thing and why it's a good thing, and get them to go along with it.</p>	<p>... As I mentioned, [he] and I do the strategic plan, and so we can plant the seeds. The strategic planning committee reviews that and they have the right to say no. But, you know, [he] put specific wording in that he wanted: For service learning...the strategic plan should and to some extent does, guide what we do...it gives us the right to go out and do things because the strategic plan says we're s'posed to be doing 'em... I think more and more, with the current dean, the strategic plan is what we're trying to do.</p>
Maintaining Flexibility	<p>...if they say oh yeah, there's some grant money, we need money, let's go for that, so then all of a sudden it changes the shape and the direction of the program.</p>	<p>We could see eventually that will reduce our costs here as well, because we won't need quite as much support personnel in the clinics if we have more students going out.</p>	<p>That was the second [site] we did, and, it was kinda like well, okay, you know, do we apply this exactly the same or, what do we do?</p>	<p>I think, there were not any catastrophic failures. In other words, we didn't have to close any sites...But I think that there are always situations where things don't work as well as you want, and then you, then you look at it and say well that</p>	<p>And, sometimes we change that wording a little bit, but basically...the strategic plan should and to some extent does, guide what we do. It guides how we use our resources..What's good is the strategic plan, you never finish anything that you start</p>

didn't work, let's do it this way.

<p>Networking the Change</p> <p>He's not a dentist, but he's really gotten the fever to help you know, he's very much become a very good solidier about putting together the pieces to help the snap.</p>	<p>I really let him be the mouthpiece or you know the champion of it and then I kind of worked behind the scenes...I could make suggestions to him as to what he could do to kind of shepherd the thing through the organization at the state, and sometimes even just having like a hallway conversation or in the ladies restroom you see someone from the Medicaid program and say how is that going and oh, I think it is a great idea and you know it is going to pay you huge dividends and we can just get everyone to agree to it.</p>	<p>They were having a lot a trouble hiring and maintaining dentists. The directors of those health centers don't know much about dentistry and they don't know how a dental practice runs. And so when we offered to... basically form an affiliation with them, whereby...we would help hire the dentist, and the dentist would be our employee, they're payin' for it, but it's our employee, so they're basically paying us so that we can pay the dentist, that has worked much better. We know how to recruit, we know how to, help manage the practice.</p>	<p>I think when visiting with the dean, I am making sure that the dean was on board, secondly meeting with the executive committee, I am making sure that the department chairs and key leaders within the college were supportive of it, and then the biggest hurdle probably was the curriculum committee.</p>	<p>A lot of people have become kinda reenergized by these programs...I feel like I'm doin' my job if ...I see good things happening because those folks have, taken ideas and...taken it way beyond what I could even dream it could do.</p>
<p>Envisioning</p> <p>I realized that there was a good opportunity to do a lot of really good... service throughout the state, which, among our many goals...I think one that's kind of a hidden overriding goal for me, since I took this job, is that we become a, very invaluable asset to the entire state.</p>	<p>The first time we expanded it went to one week. And then we had a grant back in the '90s...And that whole idea was to get students out into the rural areas, because...since the '70s we knew there was gonna be a shortage in the rural areas at some point. So it was an idea meant to encourage</p>	<p>So if you're tryin' to establish something different ...you need to have all the idea people go out and... build a groundswell, so when the committee gets up, they say yes, this is a wonderful idea, we've heard wonderful things about it, let's go with it.</p>	<p>I was developing both at the same time...and basically the way I presented it is, if I can get support internally, and if I can get people outside, then we're gonna go with this, okay?</p>	<p>I hope what we're doin' is spawning a whole generation of providers... We had a graduate from last year that came back, just to be a stand around volunteer faculty member for [a volunteer project] this year.</p>

students to go set up practices in rural [areas]. And that, it was a 3 weeks then, since '91, and it's been that way ever since.

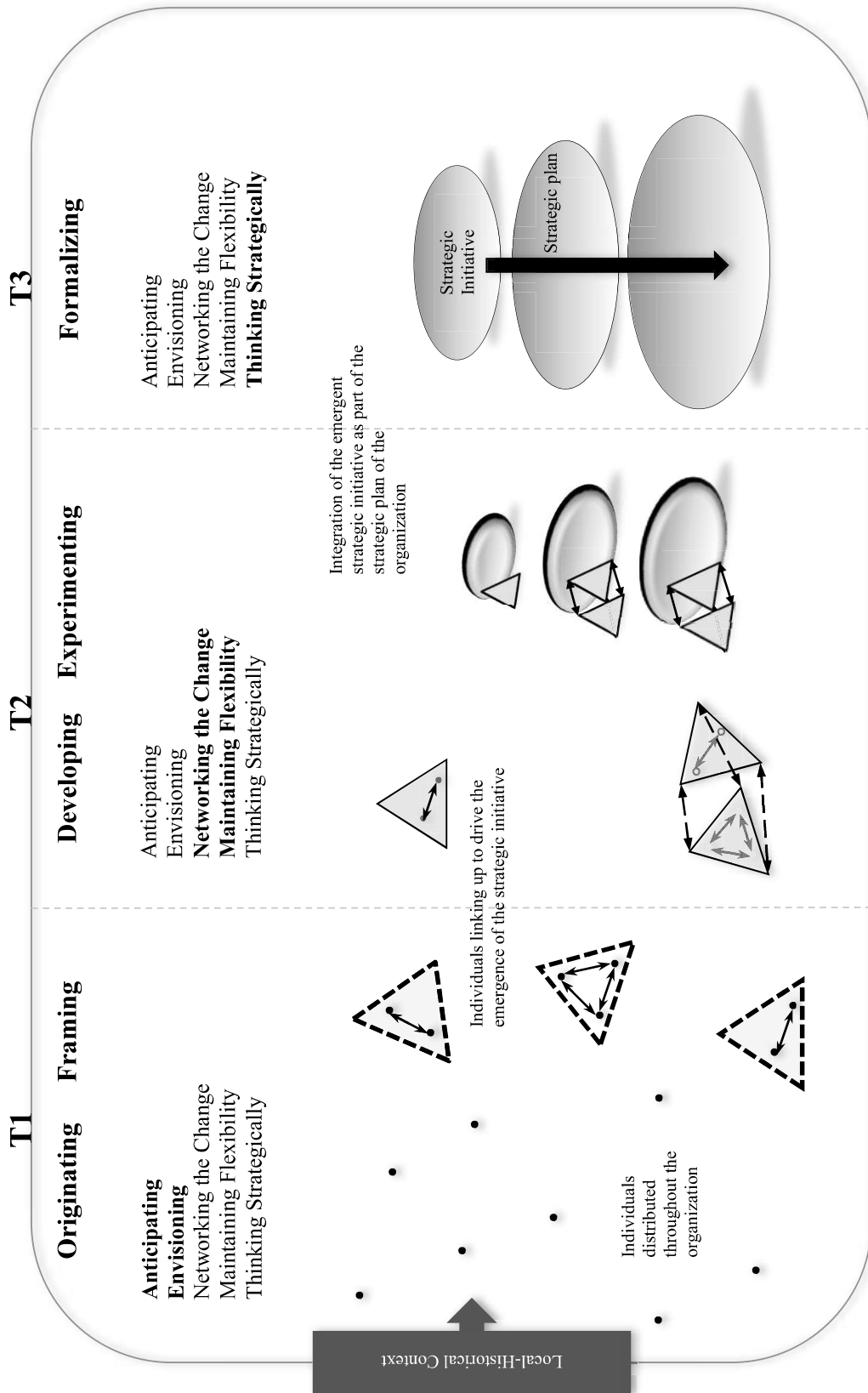
Anticipating	<p>There, have been times...where dental schools were threatened to close because they didn't seem to be serving the mission of providing dentists and services to the state. And so I wanted to be sure that we've got that base covered very well. And, at the same time, there seems to be a great need throughout the state. There's an access to dental care issue... And the problem is there are plenty of dentists in [the state], it's just that the distribution of where they're at is not so good...So it looks like to us a perfect to me, like a perfect opportunity to...we can provide those kinds of services, we don't mind doing that.</p>	<p>So one of the concerns is if you send them away too long, and you interrupt that series of steps, what do you do? Does another student take over, which is kind of ...not the best thing...So we're working out those kinds of things as to...how do you cover the patients, how do you cover the emergencies and so forth.</p>	<p>They're our employees, we can bring 'em back here for calibration, we can bring 'em back here...they feel a part of the university which is a wonderful tie to a remote rural place.</p>	<p>We have to define what we can and can't do. And, part of being a resource is being a good university system, which means developing our own research to stay on the cutting edge of knowledge and, and making sure our...faculty are better.</p>
	<p>I think the demographic changes within the dental clinic itself that are geriatric patient population was really getting quite large in the clinic, the people had been coming for 40 years, and having their teeth cleaned, and you know, they need partials or dentures, or may be they already had partials and dentures, and we really could not do anything more for them, but I think the demographic changes in the clinic and the fact that the clinic to be totally honest is really turning into a geriatric clinic.</p>			

TABLE 3
Evidence of the “I did it” phenomenon

Informant’s organizational role	Year informant started at Environ	Year this informant believed the initiative began	Evidence of “I did it”
Faculty member	1983	1993	I was interested from the start, so whenever [the Dean] had—almost any time he’s had meetings about it, I’ve attended, tried to, to support where I could...I’ve been involved almost from the start in that regard...that’s one of the areas that’s my responsibility. So...I thought that’s gonna be my issue you know. It’s kinda like, you know, you better figure out a way to do this because it’s your responsibility.
Staff member	1986	1988	I don’t have to do as much as I did... You know, because...I did the whole thing. I mean...I did all the correspondence to all of our mentors...all the course materials together, I did a presentation to all the students, I handed out all the materials, I got all their selections back, I did all the scheduling, I did all the assignment letters, I set up their housing in all these communities. You know, we’re talkin’ about... I was workin’ with like 45, or, 60 to 65 students every year, getting them out in to all these communities.
Administrator	2000	2001	I mean I don’t wanna take all the credit, but it really came, I mean from my heart. And I learned a lot about these issues...I mean it came through my heart, but it came, from my knowledge...if I had simply been a [dentist], from [a university]...I don’t think this would have happened...when I got here, it was like all the stars lined up, you know...the situation is right, this need is out there.
Faculty member	Not available	1976	I did...it was one of those opportunities for a grant, it was an opportunity to... foster what I wanted to, try to get accomplished. And... I piggybacked with [another faculty member] on it, and he and I wrote it, and I was the preclinical investigator
Administrator	1981	2001	I was in an essential position whether I wanted to be or not... interestingly enough I am very supportive of all of this kind of stuff and so [there’s] a small cadre of us who feel pretty strongly that this is the way we ought to go...So I was in a very essential role.
Faculty member	2007	2002	I suppose, I am the culprit...I contacted [the administrator] ...and you know I just said you know I have been to national meetings and I am busy with other dental schools and they are doing this cost-based reimbursement thing with the public health clinics and it seems to me like we should be able to do something with that...so I really let him be the mouthpiece or you know the champion of it and then I kind of work behind the scenes...I could make suggestions to him as to what he could do to kind of shepherd the thing through the organization at the state, and sometimes even just having like a hallway

conversation or in the ladies restroom...and say how is that going and oh, I think it is a great idea and you know it is going to pay you huge dividends and we can just get everyone to agree to it.

FIGURE 1
A graphical depiction of distributed strategic leadership as occurring throughout the emergent strategic initiative process



All strategic leadership behaviors were exhibited throughout the process. The bolded behaviors in each stage of the process indicate the most salient strategic leadership behaviors in that stage. The graph is separated into T1, T2, and T3 to represent Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3. These are not reflective of specific dates and year, but rather the temporal division of the process as a whole.

APPENDIX A
Interview Protocol

1. Can you please describe for us (or tell us what you know about) the strategic change in service learning that has occurred in the College of Dentistry?
2. How was the change initiative launched?
3. Were there individuals who championed this idea? Who were they? What efforts did they take to champion the idea? What were the consequences of these efforts?
4. Who were the other key players involved in the change initiative? What was the role of each of these players in implementing the initiative?
5. What was your role in initiating and implementing the change?
6. How did the strategic change initiative diffuse/flow within the organization?
7. What factors facilitated the change process? (Can you think of any other factors that could have further facilitated the change process?)
8. What obstacles were there in the change process? Why do you think these problems arose?
9. Were there any surprises in the change process?
10. What were the consequences of the change (long term and short term)?
11. If you reflect back on this strategic change process overall, what do you think could have been done differently (or what would you have done differently) to make this process more effective?