From Outsider To Insider:
A Case Study Of Anticipatory Socialization And Its Impact On Role Expectation And Transition Of An Outside CEO

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ABSTRACT

The number of CEO successions is on the rise. Despite its importance to business scholars, what underlies successful or failed successions is not well understood. This paper examines this topic by looking at an under researched area of CEO transitions, the socialization process of an outsider CEO into a new organization and how this process may impact role expectation and transition into an organization. As an initial qualitative and exploratory piece, the goal of this paper is two-fold. First, this paper looks at how a CEO engages in the socialization process into a firm and its broader implications in a leader's willingness to identify with an organization. Second, this paper proposes a potential model that can be applied to explain this process for future research and application to other CEO succession studies.

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL CONTEXT

ccording to Burson-Marstellar (2003), increasingly volatile markets and external conditions play a significant role in a CEO's tenure and desire to remain at the helm of an organization. Over a three year period, the number of major corporations with new CEOs reached over 57% with the average tenure of CEOs in some industries at around 26 months (CEOGO.com; Challenger et al. 2002). In 2003 alone, Burson-Marstellar reported that 35% of CEOs have thought about quitting their positions due the "increasing pace and impatience of the modern business world" (2003: p.1). While increased turnover and transitions of CEOs may be due to a variety of factors ranging from personal dissatisfaction to failed performance, extant research has focused on the organizational outcomes of CEO turnover and successions such as the signaling effect leading to increased or decreased financial performance (Wiersema and Moliterno, 2003; Berkovitch and Israel, 2000). At a more micro organizational level, research has looked primarily at what kinds of leaders are effective or ineffective in transitioning into organizations by focusing on dispositional and situational antecedents (Fondas and Wiersema, 1997: 563) and executive team composition (e.g., Bantel and Jackson, 1989). Such theories, as Fondas and Wiersema (1997) explain, ignore the processes that may impact a leader's successful or failed succession.

The purpose of this paper is to look at how an outside CEO transitions into a new role that may lead to successful selection and socialization of that CEO into an organization. This process also known as socialization is one by which an individual learns his or her organizational role (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). As Van Maanen and Schein (1979) explain, this learning process may occur formally (e.g., recruitment and training programs) or informally (i.e. through a mentor). Socialization may also occur either before a person has officially entered an organization, also known as anticipatory socialization, or once an individual has officially joined an organization, also known as post-entry socialization.

As extant research studies have shown, the socialization literature has typically examined this process in terms of person organization fit (e.g., Chatman, 1991) by looking at how firms select and recruit employees into the organization; the tactics that newcomers use (e.g., use of other employees as informational referents) as they progress through a series of stages from outsider to insider in order to make sense of events and cope with their environments (Morrison, 1993); and how organizations use socialization tactics (e.g., training and orientation) to help newcomers adapt to their new roles (Morrison, 1993).

Although these approaches show how people learn their roles in an organization, the socialization literature has typically examined this process as a reactive process by which employees are socialized directly into their organizations without taking a pro-active stance in their socialization. Additionally, the socialization literature has typically focused on post-entry socialization (Hyman, Baldry, and Scholaris, 2003). Both of these core assumptions in the socialization are due to the literature's association of socialization as a form of managerial control for mid to lower level employees of an organization, once they have been hired into an organization.

While such assumptions may be appropriate to explain how mid to lower levels adapt to new organizational environments, these assumptions may not necessarily be appropriate within the context of CEO socialization. Extant research has documented how CEOs are charged with knowing and transforming an organizational culture; this suggests that when a newcomer CEO takes the helm of an organization, often there is an expectation that the CEO has some familiarity with the organizational norms and culture. Extant research also suggests that there is an expectation, by the nature of the position, that the CEO is the ultimate manager and leader of the organization; this implies that the leader is ultimately responsible for his or her socialization. For this reason, anticipatory or pre-entry socialization is an appropriate lens to evaluate CEO socialization because it is the process by which individuals come to know their future positions, occupations, and social relationships (Applebaum and Chambliss, 1995) prior to entering an organization.

Therefore, the way in which anticipatory socialization occurs plays a critical role in understanding how a newcomer CEO learns his or her role in an organization. In the case of CEOs who may neither have the time nor the opportunity to familiarize themselves with an organization over a six-month period after official entry, as is often the case with mid to low entry level recruits, anticipatory socialization becomes the process by which CEOs learn and assimilate themselves into a new organizational role.

As Hyman et al. (2003) suggest, anticipatory socialization relies upon information-seeking behaviors on the part of newcomers to understand their organizational environments. Information-seeking behaviors (e.g., direct or indirect questioning) are the means by which individuals make sense out of environments (Miller and Jablin, 1991). These tactics assume that organizational learning is part of this process. Therefore, as newcomers learn about an organization of which their role is a part, they may use a variety of different information-seeking tactics to affirm or disconfirm their assumptions about organizational roles, values, and practices. Newcomers for example may seek out information during the pre-entry phases in order to reduce uncertainty and to learn about the organization (Miller and Jablin, 1991).

In this sense, information-seeking is a critical component in understanding how anticipatory socialization occurs through models such as Miller and Jablin's (1991) model on information-seeking behaviors for organizational newcomers. While there is potential significance in using such models, these models have not been applied to senior executive levels.

METHODOLOGY

As part of showing how such models may be used to create further insight into this process, I utilized a case study of a CEO's anticipatory socialization into an organization based on a first-hand account written by John Sculley, the former CEO of Apple Computer. Using Glaser and Strauss' grounded theory methodology, I identified emergent themes in the text by using a case rather than a variable based approach in which a corpus text is read iteratively to identify themes and relationship to build theory inductively (Borgatti, 2005). Since socialization is an individual

process in which subjects derive meaning within a real-life context, grounded theory provides the means by which to understand the underlying assumptions as an individual transition's into an organization over time.

For the purpose of this study, this approach is particularly effective in identifying *how* a CEO transitions into an organization over time as opposed to other studies in which only the factors such as core antecedents and outcomes are analyzed with respect to a leader's transition. While variance models that examine these antecedents and outcomes may provide more generalizable and predictive models based on an evaluation of these variable components, process models, such as the one proposed in this paper, enable the researcher to gain greater insight into understanding how an individual phenomenon may occur prior to testing its generalizability across cases. The focus of this paper therefore is to describe this individual phenomenon through a process model based on themes identified through grounded theory. After identifying these themes and phases, a preliminary cross-comparative analysis based on interview data of four CEOs was utilized through a compare and contrast method in order to affirm or disconfirm the potential generalizability of Sculley's socialization to other outside CEO cases.

CASE OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS

Background

When John Sculley assumed the position of President and CEO of Apple in 1983, Apple Computer faced competitive threats from IBM. Two years prior, Steve Jobs had challenged IBM's entrance into the PC market by questioning IBM's objective. In 1981, with the industry generating more than $1 billion in sales, IBM wanted to ensure its market position. IBM decided to launch its first PC that year. Apple's response to IBM was a full-page ad in the Wall Street Journal titled, "Welcome IBM, Seriously" (Carlton, 1997).

By May of 1982, Jobs noticed the emergence of key competitors such as IBM, Xerox, Tandy and others. Although, Jobs was not formally in charge by title of President and CEO of Apple, he had the most influence at that time. Jobs' influence increased after Mike Scott's, the former President and CEO of Apple, resignation from Apple in 1981. Jobs specifically held the title of Chairman while the interim CEO title was given to Mike Markkula. The titles were not at the time indicative to the level of involvement. Markkula let Jobs run Apple during that period. However, the understanding was that Jobs would continue to lead new product innovation efforts while an executive search was underway to find a new President and CEO. Jobs would also have input in the selection of the new President and CEO, which eventually included the recruitment of John Sculley, the President of Pepsi-Cola.

Recruitment And The Organization's Assessment Of Sculley's Organizational Fit

To secure a new CEO, Apple's board hired an executive recruiter, Gerry Roche of Heidrick and Struggles. Roche was known for his ability to recruit CEOs. As Sculley explains, Roche was known as the "CEO power broker" and that a call from Roche was never left unnoticed. After making the cover of *Businessweek* for his work on the Pepsi Generation marketing campaign, Sculley's notoriety made him popular with executive recruiters. In the case of Apple, Roche explained that Apple had been looking for someone with international marketing expertise and someone whom Jobs thought was really great and from whom he could learn. Roche also indicated in his conversations with Sculley that the new CEO would report to the board and that Jobs would focus upon product development. These were the formal selection criteria that Jobs and the board wanted in order to secure Apple's performance as a market-competitor.

The desire to find a person who fit these criteria resulted in aggressive action. Roche indicated to Sculley his personal knowledge of both founders and how extraordinary these entrepreneurs were. One such pitch employed by Roche highlighted Jobs' and Wozniack's ability to build a Fortune 500 in less than five years. Sculley remarked how this message tapped into his interest in meeting exceptionally bright and successful people. After agreeing to meet the entrepreneurs in December of 1982, Sculley insisted that he did not want any obligation to take the job. Having known Sculley for several years preceding the recruitment at Apple, Roche leveraged his personal friendship with Sculley as a form of assurance that Sculley need not feel pressured into taking the job.

Sculley Begins To Question His Old Versus His New Role And Identity

Although popular with executive recruiters, Sculley showed initially a firm adherence to his old organizational identity. Evidence of Sculley's adherence to his old organizational identity is seen through his continuous voicing that he had no interest in leaving Pepsi; his view that Pepsi was like an extended family to him; and his continual references of his happiness at Pepsi-Cola.

However during the course of recruitment, Sculley began to question his role and identity. After being initially called by Roche, Sculley received a package from Roche about Apple Computer and its founders. Sculley remarked being impressed by the package and the mission statement of the company which read, "Bringing technology to individuals through personal computers is what we believe is the extraordinary business of this decade" (Sculley, 1987: 56). Sculley states not only being struck by this "dramatic mission," but also talks about how this package triggered his memories as youngster tinkering with electronics.

After each consultation, Sculley felt stress in his organizational identity. Despite his persistent refusal to join Apple, Sculley became increasingly socialized and identified with Apple. As Sculley (1987: 81) explains, "I found myself irresistibly drawn to Steve's world. As Apple's allure continued to grow, I felt more tension. In a week's time, I had to fly to Hawaii for the annual Pepsi Bottlers Convention. I agreed to visit with Steve again while on the West Coast. I already had decided that my speech would be on personal computers." Part of this allure came from Sculley's desire to build things and his childhood fascination with technology. Jobs' world of creating a grandiose vision played upon Sculley's desires, which he felt were suppressed at Pepsi but had not noticed until Apple's recruitment of him. As Sculley (1987: 115) explains, "I've always loved electronics. There is something incredible that's going on in the world now, and it's in computers and it's all in digital electronics. It's a whole new kind of electronics that I've never been part of before. I've had a chance to get exposed to it and nothing has excited me as much since I was kid."

Sculley Begins A Mentoring Relationship With Steve Jobs To Learn And To Craft His Role In The Organization

While Jobs tapped into Sculley's interest in electronics and his expertise as a guru marketer, Sculley increasingly became fully engaged in developing a mentoring relationship with Jobs in order to shape the future of Apple's product-line and also his role within the organization. As part of this process, Sculley began to take notes regarding his thoughts and reflections about Apple after each meeting in which he discussed Apple's marketing strategy and future direction. Sculley, reflecting on one such meeting, remarked, "I hadn't had as much fun since I was in International Foods" (Sculley, 1987: 71). Over time, these meetings resulted in greater kinship ties with Jobs and the Apple as an organization. These ties resulted in a switch from Sculley as an observer and a consultant to Sculley's acknowledgement of becoming increasingly the teacher and Jobs becoming the student. As Sculley states, "What Steve like most was simplicity and elegance…I gained a sense that I could be a teacher to a brilliant student" (Sculley, 1987: p. 88).

Through this process, Sculley became not only proactive in gaining a sense of what his role would be at Apple, but also how he could potentially shape and redirect the organization as a form of job crafting. Job crafting is defined as an individual's voluntary behavior in proactively shaping an organizational role and its boundaries (e.g., task, relational, or environmental) to derive meaning from that role (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). Sculley's decision to "tutor" Jobs regarding how he should market the Macintosh allowed Sculley to define not only the task boundaries, but also the relational boundaries of the his future role at Apple would be. Within the context of Sculley's case, job crafting therefore was one of the means by which he further established a mentoring relationship with Jobs and also socialized himself into his role at Apple.

Sculley Seeks Information From Employees And External Employee Members To Test Whether He Should Assume Apple's Organizational Identity

After engaging in several meetings to learn about and also to advise Jobs and Roche about his potential role at Apple, Sculley sought out information to confirm whether he should take on this new role and organizational

identity at Apple. This process was iterative and was an integral part of Sculley's socialization into Apple. As Miller and Jablin (1991) suggest, such information-seeking activities are the mechanisms that facilitate a comparative analysis between job expectations and values during socialization and those of the new environment.

In the case of Sculley, this information gathering and evaluation occurred on multiple occasions through indirect information-seeking tactics, such as surveillance, observation, third party consultation with subordinates in the organization, and through direct information-seeking tactics, such as use of direct questioning tactics with external members of the organization (e.g. family members and friends). Indirect-seeking tactics are implied during Sculley's visits to Apple through his multiple references of observing and evaluating employee enthusiasm as a form assessment in order to measure the dynamic nature of the culture before making his final decision to join. Direct-seeking tactics are more apparent through Sculley's explicit statements during his socialization process in asking Meg and Jack, his two children, along with his wife regarding their opinion of Steve Jobs and Apple. As Sculley describes, "Celebrities couldn't turn their heads. But the mere mention of Steve Jobs was something else" (Sculley, 1987: 61). Sculley therefore formulated his opinions about people based on their position and importance.

Sculley Decides To Disregard His Previous Identification With Pepsi-Cola And To Identify Completely With Apple

From these conversations and observations, Sculley assessed whether his decision to disregard his previous organizational identification with Pepsi-Cola and his decision to identify with Apple was a viable and a good option for him to pursue. The culmination of such events resulted in Sculley's final resignation from Pepsi and explicit comments regarding his full identification with Apple. As Sculley (1987: p. 130) states, "I left my old identity in a closet in Greenwich when I packed a bag of casual clothes, without a single suit." Sculley's identification with Apple was the result of being successfully socialized into his role as Apple's CEO as part of his anticipatory socialization process. While his decision "shocked" everyone at Pepsi-Cola, Sculley insinuates how quickly he was able to transition into his role as CEO of Apple. As Sculley explains, (1987: p. 133) "Within days, my Pepsi experience seemed out of another lifetime. I had heard Apple described as a dream company and once thought it little more than a hyperbole. But my first few months at the company exceeded all of my expectations."

DISCUSSION

At first glance, this case study provides an illustration of an outside CEO's successful recruitment. However, upon further analysis, this case shows how an outside CEO actively engages in his own anticipatory socialization into a new role and organization. In the case of John Sculley, anticipatory socialization occurred through a four-phased iterative process that ultimately led to the outcome of his decision to officially join Apple in 1983, and then remain at the helm of the organization approximately a decade later.
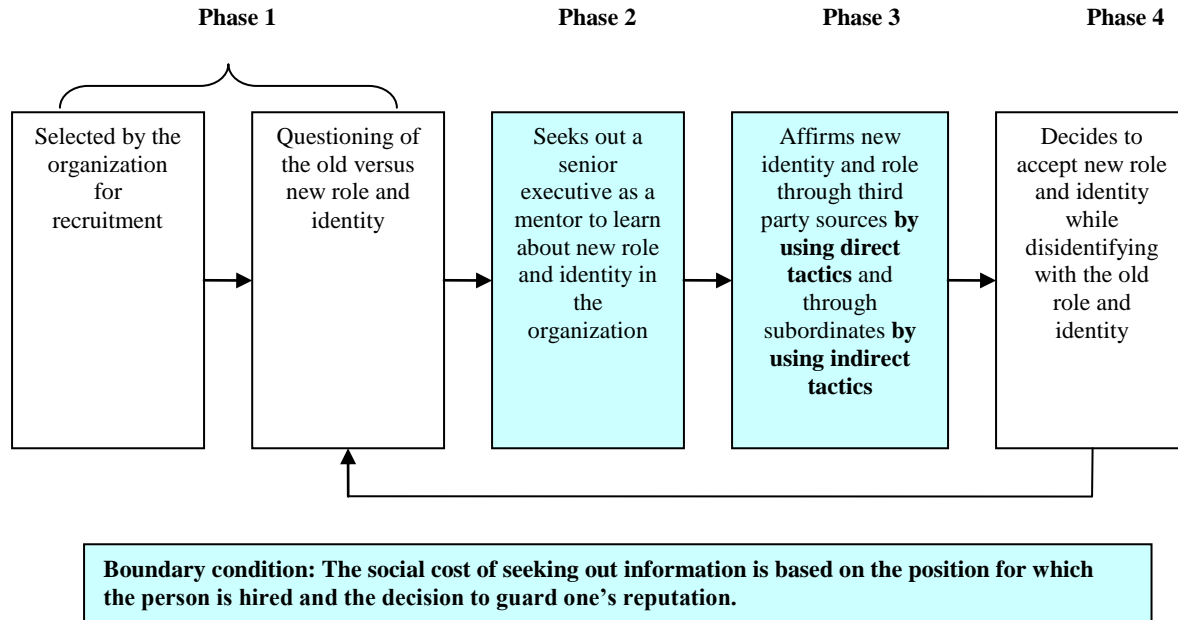
As Figure 1 shows, this anticipatory socialization process began with Sculley being selected for recruitment by Apple, which then prompted a questioning of his old versus his new identity. The first phase of this process was triggered by an executive recruiter who leveraged his personal ties leading Sculley's to initially consider whether he should disidentify with Pepsi-Cola.

This questioning process included obtaining more data points by visiting Apple headquarters and meeting with Steve Jobs multiple times. While in this phase, Sculley attempted to learn from Jobs and other Apple employees not only about the organization (i.e., such as its buy-in management decision-making protocol), but also what his role would be. These data points would aid Sculley in understanding how he could impact or change his organizational role, which in turn changed his organizational identity.

When comparing this phase to other phased-models in the socialization literature, phase one is not strikingly different from the encounter phase of socialization models in which a mid to lower level person is selected and then considers the implications of his or her new role. However, what is particularly different in Sculley's case is that he engaged in this questioning process six months in advance to joining a company. This time frame is different when compared to mid to lower level employees. Typically for mid to lower level employees this phase is shorter with the

questioning period extending after entry into the organization. However, in the case of the four other CEOs, an initial cross-comparative of their interview data appear to validate Sculley's longer socialization process as typical for leaders especially prior to organizational entry. As one CEO noted, there was over a year long search that entailed meeting with the Board of Directors while he weighed the costs of switching and assuming a new role.

Figure 1: CEO Sculley's Socialization

Phase 1		Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Selected by the organization for recruitment	Questioning of the old versus new role and identity	Seeks out a senior executive as a mentor to learn about new role and identity in the organization	Affirms new identity and role through third party sources **by using direct tactics** and through subordinates **by using indirect tactics**	Decides to accept new role and identity while disidentifying with the old role and identity

Boundary condition: The social cost of seeking out information is based on the position for which the person is hired and the decision to guard one's reputation.

Yet another difference when compared to the socialization of mid to lower level employees includes Sculley's decision to develop more deeply a mentoring relationship with a senior-level executive, Steve Jobs, in order to shape and craft his future role. Although mid to lower level employees may establish mentoring relationships to learn one's role in an organization, less often are such relationships used to influence and define a role during socialization phase. A simple explanation could be that mid to lower level employees typically lack the power or the experience to assume a proactive stance in shaping or job-crafting their future role during the socialization phase due to personal costs involved (i.e., such as being perceived as presumptuous and not conforming to organizational norms), and therefore may not engage in phase two of this model. However at the leader level, three out of the four executives interviewed, commented on the fact that they developed mentoring relationships not only to learn about their new role, but also to define their role in order to help affirm or disconfirm organizational fit.

This suggests that in phase three, when CEOs such as John Sculley begin to affirm a new identity as part of their socialization, they may have different data points and relationships than mid to lower level employees. This may be a by-product of their position in which it may become more costly for executives to affirm an identity through information seeking tactics with superiors (e.g., board members) or at the peer level (e.g., predecessor). This may result in CEOs relying more upon external third-party sources (e.g., friends or family members) for direct questioning or use of indirect information-seeking tactics (e.g., observation and indirect questioning) with subordinate employees as a safer measure to affirm or disconfirm what they have learned from senior level mentors.

As Miller and Jablin (1991) explain, these social costs drive in part the type of information-seeking tactic used. In the case of John Sculley, his account suggests limited use of direct questioning techniques with employees and a reliance on observation and surveillance methods; direct questioning was utilized with external organizational sources (e.g., his wife, children, and friends). A similar theme was also noticed in the interviews with the four other

CEOs. One CEO in particular commented on the importance of consulting with his wife regarding whether the new organization was a good fit for him. The same outside CEO remarked that with employees of the new organization, he "learned what the organization was really like" by watching how these employees interacted with each other and not by directly asking them.

These tactics provided either affirming or disconfirming data that were bounded by the social cost of trying to obtain this information in order to guard or protect personal reputation. The resultant affirmation or disconfirmation of the new role would, if unresolved, lead to further questioning of the old organizational identity versus the new organizational identity. This cycle, in the case of Sculley, would repeat itself until Sculley was fully socialized into the organization.

As illustrated in the case, exposure to the Apple environment and Jobs' influence threw Sculley into a state of shock, a typical reaction found during the anticipatory socialization process. For Sculley, shock resulted from conflicting expectations. Should he join Apple? Should he maintain his loyalty to Pepsi Cola? Initially, Sculley was confident about his own expectations. However, overtime, there was an evolution. As Sculley became increasingly socialized into Apple's culture, he formed new expectations about his organizational identity, role expectation, and of himself. This evolution occurred while Sculley tried to make sense of his environment by seeking out information through confidants by using direct-information seeking techniques versus more subtle tactics that were used with Apple employees. In Sculley's case, this cycle occurred numerous times during his socialization. However in the case of the four CEOs who were interviewed, this cycling effect when compared to Sculley's appeared to vary in frequency.

Despite this difference in frequency, all CEOs appeared to follow the same iterative pattern as described in the model of Sculley's socialization into Apple. Of particular importance to these CEOs were the social costs involved in this process. All CEOs, for example, remarked or suggested that they needed to be careful whom they went to and what they asked of certain organizational members in order to protect their credibility; this suggests that the boundary conditions pertaining to the social costs of obtaining information about a role while guarding one's reputation are particularly relevant to a leader's socialization process.

The outcome of this cycle, phase four in which an individual decides to disidentify with an old role identity while identifying with a new role identity, appears to be relatively consistent with the other socialization models across employee levels; the symbolic representation of this phase occurs when individuals submit their resignation from one role and officially sign on to another.

In the case of Sculley and the four other CEOs, the final outcome of being successfully socialized is the acceptance of the new role and organizational identity while discarding the old role and organizational identity of the former employer. Sculley, for example, made several explicit statements about no longer feeling part of Pepsi and having left his old identity behind. In the case of the four CEOs, although their statements were not as explicit as in the case of the Sculley's account, there was a clear indication from the data that they had "broken from the past," that "they were no longer doing things the old way," that they felt "part of the new organization," and that they felt "comfortable with their new role."

Despite these subtle differences, it appears from the initial testing of this model that there are some consistent themes and phases in which outside CEOs progress through the socialization process, which may impact a CEO's decision to fully identify with a new organizational role and therefore be able to lead an organization effectively.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Understanding this kind of socialization process for outside CEOs therefore may have broader implications especially in realizing what tactics are being used by CEOs to learn about their organizational role. These tactics and phases especially when bounded by the social costs involved may restrict what a CEO really knows about a firm thereby potentially impacting future performance leading to success or failure of a CEO at the helm of the organization and resulting in a decrease or increase in CEO turnover.

In this respect, this piece adds to the socialization literature and the leader succession literature by taking an initial look at how the socialization process and use of certain information-seeking techniques by outside CEOs may result in a CEO's willingness to fully identify with a new role. The socialization model provided in this article is an additional lens to understand this process by looking at the proactive stance that members take as part of their socialization into new organizations.

While this case provides an initial rare insight and preliminary model to describe how an outside CEO becomes socialized into a new organizational role and identity, the study is limited to one case study of an outside CEO from a volatile industry with a small comparative sample to test out this model. Furthermore, this paper explores anticipatory socialization almost exclusively from the viewpoint of an outsider CEO. An insider CEO or one who is promoted from within an organization, for example, may have an easier transition process than an outsider CEO because of the insider CEO's familiarity with the organizational culture. Therefore, the information-seeking scenarios suggested in the discussion section may be different or have little significance. Finally, this paper drew its case from a high-growth company in a volatile industry. The model for example does not account for how different industrial and market contexts may influence the way in which CEOs may go about information-seeking activities, which may expose additional shortcomings in the model.

Despite these shortcomings, this article provides additional interesting avenues for future research such as looking at if there are certain information-seeking tactics that are more critical to certain kinds of entrant CEOs as opposed to others during the socialization process; whether success in a component of the socialization process spells for successful assimilation in the long run for these CEOs; and under which situations is socialization potentially a liability or an asset for an organization in developing or breaking a strong organizational role or culture. With this in mind, this article provides an initial step in understanding how such leaders through their socialization process may be able to successfully or unsuccessfully transition into their new organizational role over time.

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NOTES