

Model of Sensemaking by Weick

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Sensemaking and Organizational Interpretation

Sensemaking is when someone influences others so that they can adopt the interpretation of the sensegiver through various communicative tools like the use of rhetoric, producing stories, use of roles, embodying, and performing. For instance, politicians convince their followers that they can adopt their goals or visions.

The project of sensemaking is based on three assumptions regarding practice in communication. The first assumption is that it is possible to implement and design communication practices and systems that are responsive to human needs. The second one is that there is a possibility for the enlargement of human repertoires pursuing the vision. The third assumption is that to achieve the results, communication-based methodology approaches are needed. If the theory of sensemaking is democratizing, then it is a good thing.

Sensemaking has seven aspects according to Weick. The first element is identity construction. There is no possibility of having sensemaking if there is no sense-maker. It is as such that one can assert that it is in the eye of the beholder that one perceives sense. No one individual acts like a single sense maker yet sense-maker is singular. Each is unequal and carries a lot of identities. The second aspect of sensemaking is retrospective. It is after a specific time that the process is reflected. However, this gets done afterward. The success of the process determines the aspect looking afterward in a process. It is through the retrospection aspect that the past appears cleaner than the future or present. All the same, it is not possible to make the past transparent. The fourth element of sensemaking is sensible and enactive environments. In organizational life, people are the ones who produce the kind of situation they face (Colville, Pye, & Brown, 2016). Action plays a crucial part in sensemaking. It is not possible for people to command and then expect the environment to obey. Besides, it is impossible to predict what will happen since everything becomes part of the larger truth.

Sensemaking in Strategic Change

It is through sensemaking that critical organizational processes and outcomes get accomplished. Strategic changes trigger sensemaking through interventions. There is a recursive relationship between sensemaking and change. Sensemaking between leaders and their followers achieves strategic change. If leaders are in a position to influence their followers or members in sense-making, those individuals get motivated to make a difference in their practices and roles. They also affect others in co-constructing ways and explaining the vision. The actions and interpretations of middle managers are crucial in translating high aspirations into local changes. The changes keep the

business moving and underpin the company's vision during the transition. Therefore, actors create organizational order through sensemaking concerning strategies and structures offering plausible feedback to environmental changes. Besides, they use the approach to explain how it can be implemented and at the same, convincing others of the value of the changes. Another layer of understanding sensemaking in strategic changes includes social culture, interpersonal, and institutional context.

If sensemaking fails, the business must have a change initiative. This means that sensemaking can either inhibit or produce a change in an organization. If leaders lead others in understanding the future, the strategic shift gets instigated. As such, it creates order through the new meaning of a team and guiding vision. All the same, if there are deterrents to sensemaking, in whatever form, the organization struggles to engage in [change processes](#).

Learning, Crisis, and Organizational Adaptation

Another heuristic value of sensemaking is learning. It is a fundamental process for determining teams, individuals, and organizational members. Researchers have indicated crisis contexts where it becomes crucial to learn from error. For instance, sensemaking in a leader's response to a roof collapse facilitates learning by reducing ambiguity. The ambiguity is generated by the destruction and updating of the organization's members about the unrealized potential and weaknesses. Through this realization, the regulatory inadequacies are strengthened and revised, equipping it for the future (Aguinis, & Glavas, 2017). Another use of sensemaking is in the Air Force pilots who reveal its value in learning from error.

Sensemaking is essential, especially when there is ambiguity in an environment. However, this can be a feature inherent to context operations or acute situations caused by a sudden disaster. Despite ambiguous settings triggering sensemaking, it is difficult to make sense of actions. It is also difficult to understand the relationship between outcomes and measures. Learning, in this case, can be endangered especially face-to-face communication. In this case, knowledge is endangered at all levels through enabling individuals to have a better understanding of themselves.

Sensemaking enhances creativity and innovation. A body of work as long as it is growing connects sensemaking to creative processes and change. Creativity in this case refers to producing novel ideas while innovation refers to implementing plans. However, there is a suggestion that the prior framework prevents individuals from perceiving things from a different point of view. Besides, it can give people a positive force for creativity and identity sensemaking. According to the multilevel model, episodes of sensemaking drive the processes of creativity. The events create a negotiated belief that stays until there is a crisis again. If there is a shifting of power balancing, there is an engagement of different actors. At the same time, creativity gets fueled by the new belief structures emerging from multiparty sensemaking. It is through sensemaking that there is progress in the creative process.

Innovation and Knowledge Construction

It is good to have organizational sensemaking to have innovative firms. It should be noted that there are differences between more and less innovative companies. The differences can be seen in how people frame market and technology knowledge in businesses. Innovative firms are engaged in knowledge practices as well as business practices through which the knowledge practices are part of the relationships in which the problem gets solved. As such, they have a shared understanding of the goal and are ready to settle any unexpected issues. On the other hand, less innovative ones have no frame that encourages sensemaking. To them, technology and market knowledge are separate factors of production. The difference is that in the latter there is no intersubjective meaning.

One can state that sensemaking is naturally part of the [human brain](#). It means that they are hardwired to recall and recognize patterns and at the same responding to them. Humans tend to apply models in their lived experience materials, imposing order on the lived experience. In this case, sense-making is a frame of mind (Steigenberger, 2015). Weick encourages people to learn about sensemaking by learning something that they believe concerning sensemaking. In some of her texts, there are phrases such as consider it and set it aside, amongst others. In this case, one should integrate and apprehend ideas into what is already known. An individual should articulate what he or she thinks about his or her learning. Therefore, it means that whatever one articulates and observes is sensemaking in action.

Weick identifies domains for future research that include sense-making interaction with each emotion, power, distributed sensemaking, and institutional theory. One area of interest is politics and power in sense-making. Sense-making has been criticized for insufficient attention to power, thus becoming less politically naïve. There are multiple competing accounts of organizations exploring political processes. In this one, there are legitimate interpretations, while in others, they evaporate.

Emotion and the Social Process of Sensemaking

Sensemaking can also be understood as an emotional process. As previously noted, some accounts of sensemaking describe it as shared thought and constructed language narrative. In earlier reports regarding sensemaking, there was little effort and attention to emotional qualities. As a result, whenever an expected interruption occurs there was a reduction of emotion to autonomic arousal experiences. However, there is now a better understanding that feeling is part of the sensemaking process.

Another exciting part is the sociomateriality and embodiment in sensemaking. Recently, researchers have focused on the embodied nature of sensemaking. This has changed the conceptualization of sensemaking. The reason behind this is critiques of sensemaking. The works arise as a rational intellectual process (Basu & Palazzo, 2008). However, they ignore their embodied and embedded nature. There is little recognition of constitutive entanglement or materiality organization.

In conclusion, one must note that there can be a form of limitation in trying to understand an organization if all seven attributes are present in defining the process of sensemaking. For instance, there is an assumption by the retrospection that there cannot be the occurrence of the unprecedented invention and that it is through the past that one can make sense. Perhaps levels of retrospection and levels of connection enhance a greater range of explanations. All the same, there are organizational situations without any comparison to be made. However, this means that actions must not be overlooked as invention opportunities.

References

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