Integration Managers: Special Leaders for Special Times

by Ronald N. Ashkenas and Suzanne C. Francis

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SPECIAL REPORT

Making M&A Magic

FOR ALL THE SOUND AND FURY surrounding mergers and acquisitions these days, most of it still signifies…well, nothing. An astounding number of mergers and acquisitions fail – more than half, by some estimates – which makes them a costly proposition strategically and financially for the companies on both sides of the deal. In this special report, HBR publishes two articles intended to counteract this troubling M&A trend. "The Fine Art of Friendly Acquisition" explores the best thinking – and best practices – for clinching a solid deal between two companies. And "Integration Managers: Special Leaders for Special Times" introduces a powerful new approach to what comes next – making two companies one.

The Fine Art *of* Friendly Acquisition

by Robert J. Aiello and Michael D. Watkins

Integration Managers: Special Leaders for Special Times

by Ronald N. Ashkenas and Suzanne C. Francis

Integration Managers: Special Leaders for Special Times

It's not easy to navigate the rocky territory that two organizations must cross to become one. That's why smart companies are appointing a new and unique kind of manager.

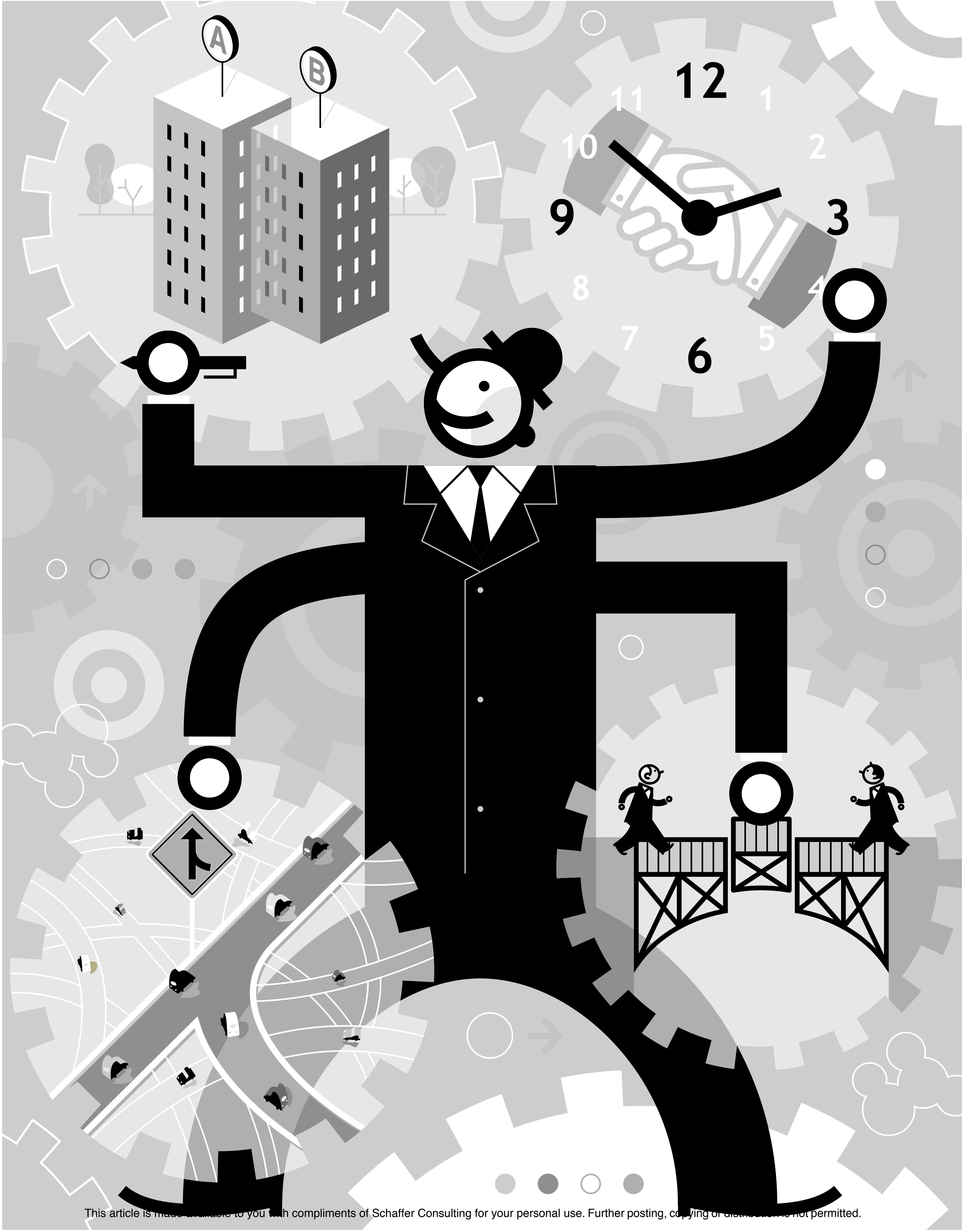
by Ronald N. Ashkenas and Suzanne C. Francis

ILLUSTRATION BY LEO ESPINOSA

CONSIDER THE IRONY: LESS THAN HALF OF all mergers and acquisitions ever reach their promised strategic and financial goals, yet companies spent more on M&A last year than ever before. According to investment bankers J.P. Morgan, companies worldwide spent $3.3 trillion on mergers and acquisitions in 1999 – fully 32% more than was spent in 1998. Basically, that means those companies failed to get the value they expected from a whopping $1.6 trillion in investments. That's a very expensive irony indeed.

Even more ironic: although the integration of an acquired company with the parent organization is a delicate and complicated process, traditionally no one has ever been responsible for that process. The due-diligence team develops a deep knowledge of the acquired company, but that team usually disbands after the deal closes. A management team will eventually run the merged organization, but often no one is responsible for the integration process itself – for charting how the two companies will combine their operations, for seeing to it that the integration meets its deadlines and performance targets, for educating the new people about the parent company, and vice versa.

To counter this gap in accountability, some enlightened companies have appointed a guide – the integration manager – to shepherd everyone through the rocky and often uncharted territory that two organizations must cross before they can function as one. Guiding this kind of expedition takes a new type of leader, someone who can jump into complex situations quickly, relate to many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levels of authority smoothly, and bridge gaps in culture and perception. But this leader also needs some traditional organizational strengths such as world-class project management skills, a deep understanding of the parent company, and enough clout to be effective.

We first encountered these new leaders at GE Capital. And since 1998, when we took a close look at how integration managers worked – as we described in our article written with Lawrence J. DeMonaco, "Making the Deal Real: How GE Capital Integrates Acquisitions" (HBR January–February 1998) – several other companies have formally designated such leaders. We have interviewed a number of them in depth, as well as some of the people with whom they've worked. Even though the acquisitions we examined covered a range of industries, geographies, and transaction sizes, the common themes are striking.

We found that integration managers help the process in four principal ways: they speed it up, create a structure for it, forge social connections between the two organizations, and help engineer short-term successes that produce business results. To show how they work, we will tell you about five acquisitions and the role integration managers played in each. Then we'll look at exactly what sort of person should do this job.

A Job Waiting to Be Defined

In July 1998, when Bill Quinn was asked to become Johnson & Johnson's first-ever integration manager for its $3.7 billion acquisition of DePuy Incorporated, he was puzzled about the role he was being asked to play. DePuy was one of the world's leading orthopedic medical device companies; with 3,000 employees, 15 manufacturing facilities, and worldwide product sales, it was much larger than J&J's own orthopedic device unit, with which it would be combined. So even though the newly consolidated company would report to J&J's worldwide chairman for medical devices, the top business leaders would be the current DePuy executives.

As the head of J&J's Quality Institute and an 18-year veteran of the company, Quinn had a firm grasp of J&J's business processes and how to go about improving them. But what was required here? Who was acquiring whom? What did integration really mean in this case? And how would Quinn fit in?

In many ways, the role of the integration manager is more akin to an entrepreneurial job in a start-up company than to a position in an established organization. Like a start-up, an acquisition begins with a strategy and a financial plan that embody a bright idea of what a new organization will be in the future. But those theoretical plans have to become reality; they are often transformed as the organization strives to quickly realize value from the money invested. The roles of the people involved – and the way they will relate to one another to make this happen – usually aren't well defined.

Often, then, the first challenge for an integration manager is to define his or her job. Quinn spent a hair-raisingly intense two weeks coming up to speed. He interviewed the key DePuy and J&J executives involved in the deal. He talked to managers from J&J's past few acquisitions. Quinn read everything possible about the industry and the acquisition. He consulted the business development people who had worked on the deal. He met with at least a half-dozen consulting firms, each of which offered its own perspective on how the integration should be handled.

Quickly, a role began to take shape in his mind. If his job was to manage the process, Quinn thought, he needed to be viewed as powerful – but also impartial – by people from both organizations. That suggested he should play the role of consultant – but one with privileged access to the top executives who would be in charge of the new organization. He gained that by joining the integration steering committee, on which sat the two DePuy executives who would eventually run the new organization; the head of the original J&J orthopedic device unit; and the new organization's boss, J&J group operating chairman Jim Lenehan.

Indeed, Quinn concluded, he needed even more access to Lenehan than membership on the integration committee afforded. That didn't necessarily mean that he should be reporting directly to Lenehan. In fact, the reporting relationship never was announced or clarified. The important thing was that people throughout Johnson & Johnson and DePuy knew that Quinn could go to Lenehan at any point and therefore took him seriously enough to seek him out.

As the integration progressed, Quinn's original thinking was confirmed. But two other roles emerged that he hadn't anticipated. The first surprise was that Quinn turned out to be a lightning rod for many people's emotions. "Everyone was under such extreme pressure and emotional stress," he explains. "They wanted to make sure the right thing was done. They did not want to see people get hurt. Many times, I was the one place where they could let that stress out. There was one day in particular when I spent four hours on the phone, and most of the time people were yelling. I was taking it really hard. Then the lightbulb went on and I realized their frustration was not directed at me. Then it was a lot easier."

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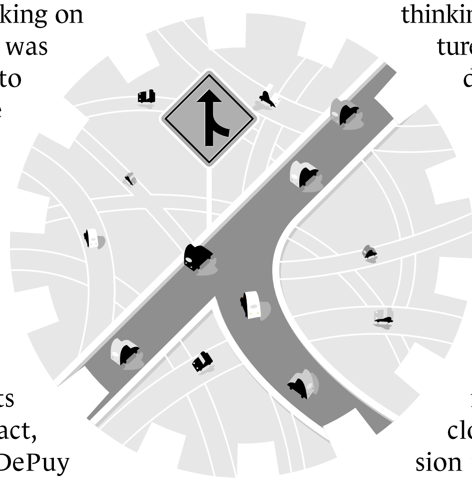
The second surprise was that having access to J&J's group operating chairman was a two-way street. It gave him clout with others, but people expected him to use that clout to raise important questions with Lenehan and the integration steering committee when they thought a decision might be going the wrong way. Some executives from both DePuy and J&J were reluctant at times to push back on the steering committee, either because they were new to the organization or because they were trying to establish themselves as part of the new team. Quinn was perceived to be in a better position to advocate a contrary view since he did not have a vested interest. But to do so took courage and persistence because, as Quinn explains, "The dilemma is doing what you think is right for the business versus doing what is easier to sell at the moment. In one case, it took me three attempts to shift their thinking on an important decision. At times, it was pretty uncomfortable coming back to them – as if I didn't understand the word no. It would have been really easy to drop it."



That courage was well rewarded: with Quinn's help, the new business came together with less conflict than J&J had experienced in some of its previous integrations, J&J retained the people it had wanted to keep, and the acquisition met its strategic and financial targets. In fact, J&J's top managers consider the DePuy acquisition to be one of its most successful, and exactly a year after that project started, they asked Quinn to manage an even bigger acquisition for the company.

All of the integration managers we interviewed had experiences similar to Bill Quinn's in that they started their assignments with a sketchy and ambiguous job description, which they filled in over time.

Life on Fast-Forward

There are two critical periods in the life of most acquisitions. The first is the time between the deal's announcement and its close. The second is the first 100 days after the close. One of the integration manager's most important roles is to move everyone as quickly as possible through those two deadlines.

That's what Jodi Mahon did when, in April 1999, she was named integration manager for General Cable's acquisition of BICC's $1.8 billion worldwide energy-cable and cable-systems businesses. Her mandate was clear: move the integration process forward as fast as possible so the new company could get a running start the day after the deal's close – in just six weeks.

At $1.2 billion, the parent company was slightly smaller than its acquisition. Together, they would form a $3 billion organization that would be third in its industry. Mahon brought seven years of company experience to the integration manager role, and she had been a member of the business development team that put the deal together. So part of her job was straightforward – working with an integration team to identify the critical elements that needed to be in place by day one. Those critical pieces were as basic as what the newly combined company would be called (BICC General) and as challenging as what the management and reporting structure would be.

But even though identifying what needed to be in place was straightforward, making it happen was not. The management team had not finalized its thinking on many issues, including the structure of several business units and the candidates for some leadership assignments. What's more, Mahon recalls, "we had a culture clash with the people within the businesses we acquired. We operated at a warp-speed faster than they did. We focused and managed our business totally differently."

Mahon's main job for the first six weeks was to push through this maze of uncertainty in time for the close date. She was not the final decision maker on many issues, but without her involvement many decisions would still have lingered beyond the close date. Even worse, they would have been decided unilaterally by the CEO. Mahon saw her role as one of anticipating and then heading off potential disaster, like an air traffic controller. "You see things that are coming," she explains. "If people cannot come to an agreement, you have to force them into a room and say, 'Make a call on this.' "

Once the acquisition is officially closed, the need for speed remains, or even accelerates. One of BICC General's main goals in the first 100 days, for example, was to achieve a $12 million annualized cost savings from its North American operations. The senior executive team mapped out exactly where the savings would come from and divvied up that number among the various functions and business units. Mahon's job was to focus the leadership team on those numbers despite all the distractions of other issues and challenges. "I moved around like a cop and said to people, 'I'm going to arrest you if you don't get this done by next Tuesday,' " she recalls.

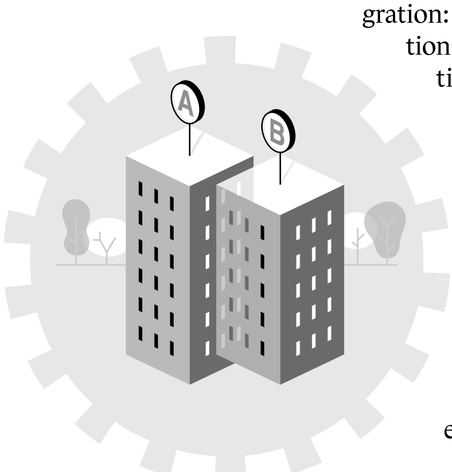
Thanks in large part to her facilitation, the North American operations exceeded its $12 million cost-reduction goal in that first 100 days. And based on that success, the company decided to accelerate its systems integration work. By the end of 1999, just six months after the deal had closed, General Cable and BICC's former North American operations had become a fully integrated company.

Putting the Chaos in Order

Putting two companies together requires disconnecting and reconnecting hundreds of processes and procedures as quickly as possible. Clearly it's a team sport, and, obviously, well-organized teams will do better than uncoordinated ones. So one of the most effective ways an integration manager guides the process is by creating the structure within which the team can operate effectively. That requires the most traditional of project management skills.

Witness what Ernie Rodriguez did when Lucent Technologies bought Ascend Communications in 1999. At nearly $20 billion when the deal was announced in January, it was one of the largest technology mergers in U.S. history. From it, Lucent expected to gain talented people and critical products – and something more. Parts of Lucent would be blended into Ascend to form Lucent's InterNetworking business. The new unit would be headed by Ascend executives who could not be brought on board until the deal was officially closed. But Lucent CEO Rich McGinn was not about to wait that long to begin the integration process. So he asked Rodriguez, a senior executive with 30 years experience at Lucent and Bell Labs, to be the integration manager just before the deal was announced. Rodriguez would pave the way for the new management team.

Rodriguez had a reputation for simplifying complicated situations. Shortly after the deal was announced, he created a road map to help people see the work ahead in a logical and achievable way. Since one of the ultimate goals was to introduce Ascend's corporate organization and its looser Silicon Valley–Route 128 culture into Lucent, Rodriguez set up teams of people drawn from both organizations. The teams were tailored to address the four key issues for this integration: customers, product solutions, people, and administration. Each team had two leaders – one from Lucent and one from Ascend. Rodriguez united the teams by instituting common tools, measures, and project management disciplines. And he did one seemingly small thing that had a big unifying effect. The teams' mandate was to have as many systems up and running as possible on the day the deal closed. But, Rodriguez explains, "with all the government and stockholder approvals required, we couldn't predict when that date might occur." To sweep away that uncertainty and focus everyone on the same point, Rodriguez set a date and *created* some certainty. "Let's assume that the deal will close on April 30," he said. "What do we want to do by then?"



The groups set expectations for what they thought should be done by April 30 – day one for the merged company. To test the integration, they worked up scenarios for daily business events. Could a customer, for example, place an order for an Ascend product sold in Europe on April 30? Could a new employee be hired smoothly? They tested the work that had been done against these scenarios in a "ready to merge" meeting in early April. This work made it easy for everyone to see – and agree – that they would be integrated satisfactorily in some areas by the closing but would need to do more work in other areas.

Knowing now exactly what they had to do, the teams focused on getting the remaining systems up and running by the actual close date, which turned out to be in June. After the close, they continued through October, working on the systems – such as pricing, the quote-to-cash process, and customer support – that could not be done before the deal was closed.

By late summer 1999, with the management team of the newly merged entity well in place, Rodriguez had handed over the daily responsibilities for integration to the business unit president. He then moved on to his next assignment – integration manager for Lucent's International Network Services acquisition, which had been recently announced.

Building the Social Connections

The people involved in mergers and acquisitions are often strangers, thrown together in a joint enterprise, sometimes against their will. Besides keeping the day-to-day business going, employees at both companies need to build new relationships, which often involves bridging language and culture gaps. The integration manager can clear paths between the two cultures by facilitating the social connections among people on both sides.

This was an important part of what Brian Bonner did when Texas Instruments asked him to be the integration manager for its $1.3 billion acquisition of Unitrode, a Merrimack, New Hampshire, maker of analog signal-processing products. The goal was to integrate Unitrode into TI's Advanced Analog Products business, so Unitrode's people needed to understand and adopt all of TI's key business and HR processes. But the strategic value of the acquisition, Bonner realized, lay not only in Unitrode's products, patents, and facilities but also in its talented and experienced workforce – particularly its analog engineers. Bonner needed to find a way to integrate them into TI without alienating them.

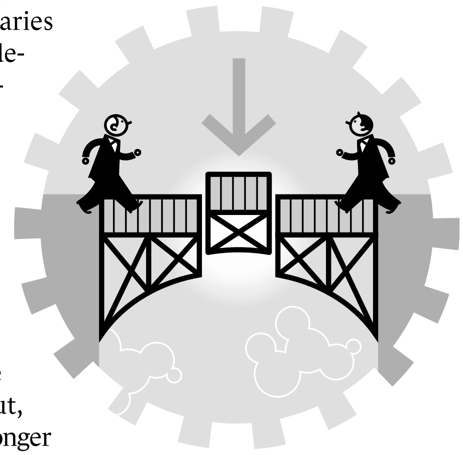
TI had already established standardized processes for connecting relatively generic systems such as purchasing, facilities, security, and telecommunications before the closing date. It was Bonner's first job, then, to identify the right senior people from both TI and Unitrode to look at the larger strategic issues: revenue goals, brand strategies, and product development, for instance. This was a task that required subtlety. "Unitrode was a successful, mature, complex business, not a dot-com start-up," Bonner explains, "so it was important to match the right levels of TI experience and knowledge with those of the Unitrode leaders." An 18-year veteran of TI, Bonner had developed personal relationships with legions of people whom he felt comfortable calling on to get involved or to provide support.

Much of what makes integration managers valuable is the fact that they have room to maneuver where others, more fixed in their roles in both companies, do not. By shuttling freely up and down the organizational hierarchy, in and out of different departments and companies, and across different locations, they can make things happen that would not have happened otherwise.

This was literally true for Bonner, since the TI executives on the teams were in Texas and their Unitrode counterparts were in New Hampshire. As Bonner shuttled back and forth between Dallas and Merrimack, he found himself picking up on problems that no one else was in a position to see. He began to leave room in his days for one-on-one meetings, particularly with the Unitrode team members in New Hampshire. In those meetings, he found, "I was talking about really important issues that hadn't come up before. It was a chance to correct misconceptions, coach people on how to handle problems, learn more about how products were developed or manufactured, and understand the Unitrode ways of doing things that should be tried at TI."

People throughout Unitrode were concerned about having a new boss and playing by unfamiliar rules in a large corporation. How could they be heard? Recognizing that no amount of long-distance teleconferencing technology was going to allay such fears, Bonner held a series of face-to-face focus groups for Unitrode employees, so they could see – physically see – that he and TI would actually listen to their concerns. Once those concerns were aired, he could begin translating TI-speak into their terms.

"Even though up in New Hampshire they speak English like they do in Texas," Bonner says, "we noticed that our vocabularies were different. We described things in TI-speak, and they would listen to it and interpret it with the filter they had from their language." For instance, TI executives would talk about developing product strategies, and the Unitrode people would tune out, assuming that was no longer their responsibility. TI, though, still wanted the Unitrode people to develop their own product strategies and submit them for approval through the TI structure. It was only through face-to-face discussions with Bonner and others that such misconceptions were discovered and assuaged.



Time and again, Bonner had to anticipate the social connections that would be necessary to support the integration. This wasn't his only responsibility; it wasn't his highest priority. But those connections were essential for bringing together two very different businesses whose success depended on their being tightly coupled functionally while maintaining unique cultures in separate locations.

Getting Early Results

Speeding things along, building structures, and forging social connections are critical but, taken by themselves, they are like having a map but never using it to go anywhere. Until the journey leads to business results, the deal does not pay off. Thus the fourth task for integration managers is to orchestrate tangible successes rapidly that could not have been achieved before the companies came together. Such successes – generally achieved within the first 100 days – not only start to pay for the deal but also build confidence in the minds of managers and staff that the acquisition makes sense. That confidence is often a necessary prerequisite to true integration.

Consider Meritor Automotive (now ArvinMeritor). When the company bought Volvo's heavy-vehicle axle plant in Lindesberg, Sweden, in October 1998, the integration challenge was as much psychological and cultural as it was operational. Since its construction, the Lindesberg facility had been an integral member of the Volvo family. While

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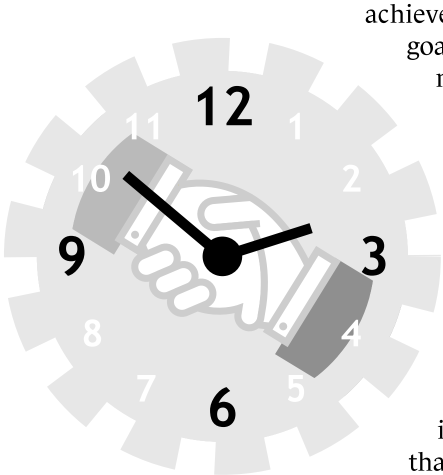
certainly not inefficient, the plant was focused on guaranteeing reliability for Volvo's heavy-vehicle assembly operations, not on cost. Consequently, the plant was vertically integrated, producing all its own axle components, and it had a history of making extra investments in staffing and equipment.

When the plant became part of Meritor, it became part of Meritor's global manufacturing system, which meant it would need to outsource the production of noncore components that it used to make itself. It also meant that Volvo became a customer – and not the only one. These two changes required a huge shift in mindset. To help Lindesberg achieve it, Meritor assigned Dave Dernberger, a 27-year veteran of the company, as on-site integration manager.

In the first week after the deal officially closed, he organized an integration workshop for the Swedish management team and key Meritor people. One of its aims was to launch several projects that could achieve business results in 100 days or less. Given the skepticism of the Swedish managers about being part of Meritor, Dernberger felt that these successes would be critical in getting them (and everyone else) on board.

The workshop identified ten high-priority initiatives that would demonstrate the benefits of being part of the Meritor global supply system and that would make a real difference to the bottom line in the first year. One of the projects involved outsourcing a specific component – something new to Lindesberg's management and staff, who had never created a spec sheet, solicited bids, or developed an outsourcing contract. Another project was aimed at marketing some of Lindesberg's unique heat-treating capabilities to other Meritor plants.

One by one, the Lindesberg plant completed the ten projects. The result was not only the achievement of its operational goals but also the true beginnings of a shift in mind-set. For example, Dernberger says, "the previous owner, now our customer, still expected that he could call the plant and request engineering changes, just like before. Now our people say, 'There may be a cost issue here or an impact on other customers that we must consider.'"



It's virtually impossible to disconnect and reconnect two companies completely and perfectly from the start. So an integration manager cannot be wedded to perfection or bound by rigid project management tools.

These initial, relatively small, successes gave Lindesberg's staff the confidence to take on more ambitious projects with Meritor's global European manufacturing system. Within just a single year, the Lindesberg plant became a fully integrated part of the Meritor system.

Who Can Do This Job?

It's obvious from the five cases we've just described that it takes a special combination of skills to be an effective integration manager. The leaders who can fill this role are not easily found in the corporate phone book. From our research and direct experience with integration managers, we have seen five likely predictors of success for individuals in this role.

Deep Knowledge of the Acquiring Company. Managers joining a new company need to ask the integration manager how to prepare reports, where to get information, how to handle a customer request, how much data are needed to back up a conclusion, whom to talk to about various subjects, and more. They need to be coached through the company's informal measures of success by someone who knows them thoroughly. Integration managers need to understand and articulate their own company's culture. And they need an industrial-size Rolodex – ready access to the key people in their company whom newly acquired managers need to contact.

We are often asked whether an integration manager can come from the newly acquired company. The answer is a categorical no. It is impossible for someone from the acquired side of the deal to know enough about the parent company's formal and informal expectations for the merger and for managers. That takes a veteran who has been through the wars and has seen, firsthand, what success is all about. So it's not surprising that all the integration managers whose stories we have told in this article were longtime employees who had held a wide variety of line and staff positions, moving through different business units, functions, and geographic locations. That being said, we have seen several cases in which a counterpart from the acquired company acted as a partner with the integration manager.

No Need for Credit. Sometimes, an integration manager needs to be tough and unbending with managers and staff, particularly about deadlines or about coming to a decision. But other times, the integration manager needs to be an empathetic listener – not only with employees whose jobs are affected but also with senior executives who might be frustrated, exhausted, anxious,

What Integration Managers Do

Every acquisition is different, demanding a different balance of efforts from the integration manager. But in a single integration project, the manager may use any or all of the following four strategies.

Inject Speed
- Ramp up planning efforts
- Accelerate implementation
- Push for decisions and actions
- Monitor progress against goals, and pace the integration efforts to meet deadlines

Engineer Success
- Help identify critical business synergies
- Launch 100-day projects to achieve short-term bottom-line results
- Orchestrate transfers of best practices between companies

Create Structure
- Provide flexible integration frameworks
- Mobilize joint teams
- Create key events and timelines
- Facilitate team and executive reviews

Make Social Connections
- Act as traveling ambassador between locations and businesses
- Serve as a lightning rod for hot issues; allow employees to vent
- Interpret the customs, language, and cultures of both companies

or angry. Not everyone can flip between being tough and being supportive. And not everyone can do that with people at different levels up and down an organization. A good integration manager knows which style is appropriate in which situation. Some of this flexibility is innate, but some of it can only be developed over time. That's another reason why most integration managers are veterans of their organizations.

Yet even experience and personal skill are not enough. In the final analysis, a major generator of this kind of flexibility is deep self-confidence combined with relatively few ego requirements. The integration manager cannot be concerned with getting credit – or even recognition – for an effective integration. As TI's Brian Bonner notes: "The danger of being the integration manager is that you think you are the CEO of this deal and you are not. You are just there to get this job done and move on." Credit belongs to the executives, managers, and staff.

Comfort with Chaos. Every integration manager we've seen had to mobilize dozens or even hundreds of people in numerous teams that cross functions, organizations, cultures, and geographies. And that takes exquisite project management and organizational skills. The teams need clear assignments; common formats for their outputs; disciplined timelines; and coordinated meeting schedules, meeting formats, communication mechanisms, and review processes. The integration manager needs not only to put this machinery and structure into place but also to coordinate and manage it on an ongoing basis.

Managing an integration project, however, is not entirely the same as managing a traditional project. It requires some tempering of the usual engineering-control mentality, for two reasons. First, unlike most project management assignments, team leaders and members in an acquisition integration project generally do not work directly for the integration manager. In fact, until all the organizational structures are clarified, some people who work on integration teams may not know to whom they report, or even whether they will have jobs or bosses in the new organization. So the integration manager needs to motivate and involve people not only by working through established channels of authority but also by inspiring people to become committed to the new organization and by making the process itself exciting.

Second, unlike many traditional projects, it's virtually impossible to disconnect and reconnect two companies completely and perfectly from the start. So an integration manager cannot be wedded to perfection or bound by rigid project management tools or control mechanisms. Meritor's Dave Dernberger, for instance, found that at one point he had to literally throw away his project management software and rely instead on a large wall chart dotted with hundreds of Post-it notes, which he and the team leaders in Lindesberg could move around almost daily. More traditional project managers might want to freeze the design of the integration once it's in place. The best integration managers keep the process moving by constantly recalibrating their plans.

A Responsible Independence. As in any expedition, the guides leading acquisition integration projects do not hang up their hats at five o'clock and go home for the night. Anyone who takes on the role needs to be prepared for six to eight months of intense activity that can consume almost every waking hour. As J&J's Bill Quinn said when asked about the advice he would give to a newly appointed integration manager: "Take your spouse out tonight, because you are not going to get a chance to do it again for a number of months. Then put on your running shoes, because you're going to need them!" But the long and intense hours are only half the story. The real issue is that those long hours are almost totally unsupervised in the traditional sense. Day to day, no one is going to tell the integration manager what to do, where to focus, whom to contact, or how to add value. Anyone selected for the job needs to be able to take initiative and make independent judgments. But that individual also needs to know when to check in with the right people to make sure things are moving in the right direction. This makes it vitally important that the integration manager have – or win – the trust of the most senior executives in his or her company.

Emotional and Cultural Intelligence. There's a saying in the acquisitions world that integrations would be easy if no people were involved. And unfortunately, too many organizations fail because they treat the integration of acquired companies just that way – as an engineering exercise and not as one that affects people's lives and futures. To avoid this blunder, it is critical to select an integration manager who can appreciate the emotional and cultural issues involved, handle them personally, and help others deal with them constructively. This is particularly important in situations where the business leaders and the business development people who have spearheaded the acquisition are heavily driven by financial and strategic considerations; those leaders tend to give the people side of the equation less weight. In such cases – and in our view, this is most of the time – the integration manager provides a critical counterbalance. The key word here is "balance." Integration activities can't be allowed to degenerate into gripe sessions or personal lobbying. Nor can they be allowed to slow down work. Effective integration managers create opportunities for people to vent their feelings but then help employees move on.

A New Leader for the Internet Economy

We have focused here on managing the integration of acquired companies. But the kind of leadership we've been describing has wider implications. Organizations in the Internet age are constantly reinventing themselves, creating flexible and boundaryless structures, and building and reworking partnerships and alliances. Most senior leaders in these ever-changing businesses will not be hierarchical strategists and order givers with permanent, multiyear assignments. More often than not, they will be consultants, facilitators, communicators, project managers, and bridge builders, asked to move in and out of situations at a moment's notice. Many will need skills very similar to the ones an integration manager needs.

In the final analysis, integration managers may represent the manager of the future – not just in what they do but in how they do it. These leaders not only drive change, they are subject to change. They help a newly formed organization succeed while at the same time learning how to be personally successful.

The individuals portrayed in this article are by no means perfect and complete examples of this new kind of role. They all struggled with aspects of the job and speculated that they would do some things differently the second time around. But it is this ability to reflect and learn that also made them successful in the first round. In the Internet age, in which organizations change at the speed of light, this ability to learn and adjust constantly may be the difference between the organizations that succeed and those that don't.

Where Are They Now?

The integration manager's job is necessarily temporary, based on the immediate needs of the organization. Often, there's no guaranteed next assignment for the integration manager or no definite plan for fitting that individual back into the organization. Of the five integration managers in this article, two returned to their original jobs and three took broader roles in their organizations. Here's what happened.

Texas Instruments' Brian Bonner
Served as integration manager for TI's Power Trends acquisition, which started in October 1999; was named TI's CIO in January 2000.

ArvinMeritor's Dave Dernberger
Continues to work at ArvinMeritor's Lindesberg, Sweden, location, but has assumed responsibilities for Pan-European operations.

BICC General's Jodi Mahon
Returned to her previous position as head of business development at BICC General.

Johnson & Johnson's Bill Quinn
Served as integration manager for J&J's $4.9 billion Centocor biotechnology acquisition, which was announced in July 1999, and then returned to his previous position as head of J&J's Quality Institute.

Lucent's Ernie Rodriguez
Served as integration manager for Lucent's $3.7 billion acquisition of International Network Services; returned to his previous role as the vice president of advanced technologies at Bell Laboratories, Lucent's research group.

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