

How do things get done?



A True Story

What do we make of this?

## How we imagine things get done

- Planned in advance
- By 'Experts'
- Implemented according to the plan

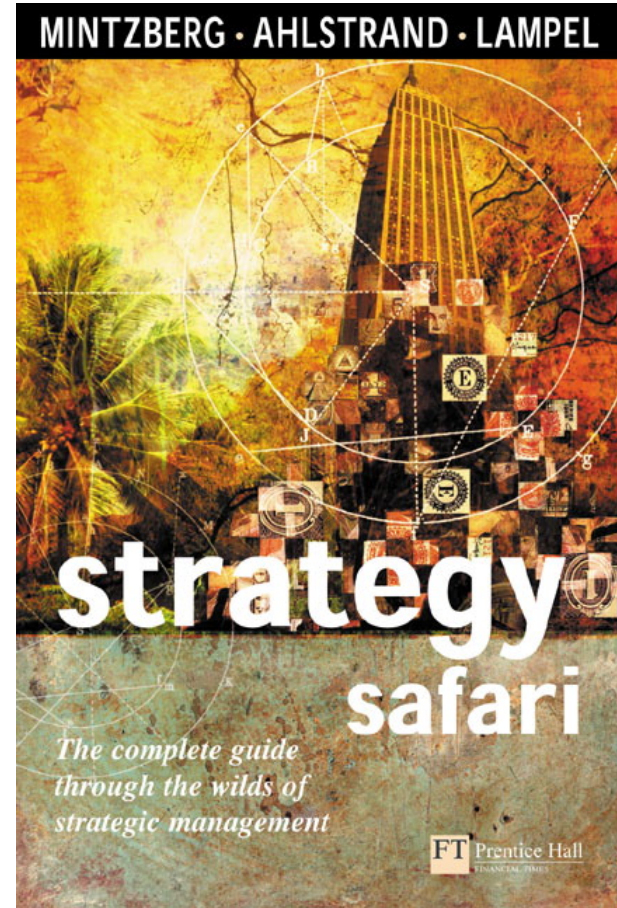
## How they really get done

- Emergent process
- Continuous interaction of strategy, action, outcomes, and sensemaking
- Involves multiple actors

The real world inevitably involves some thinking ahead as well as some adaptation en route...

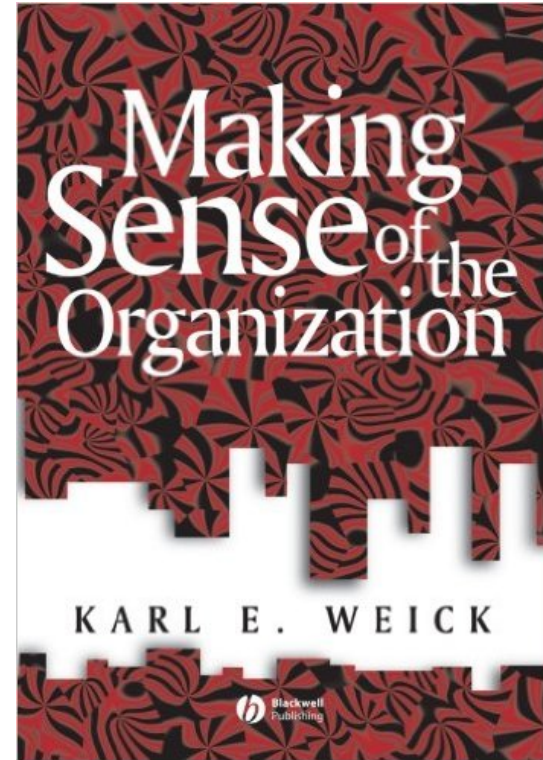
Few, if any strategies are purely deliberate, just as few are purely emergent.

One means no learning, the other means no control.



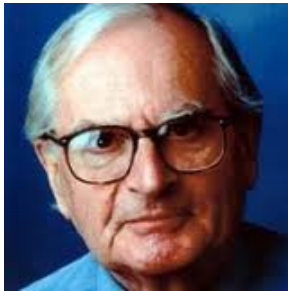
Managers keep forgetting that it is what they do, not what they plan, that explains their success. They keep giving credit to the wrong thing – namely, the plan – and having made this error, they spend more time planning and less time acting. They are astonished when more planning improves nothing...

If you get people moving, thinking clearly, and watching closely, events often become more meaningful.

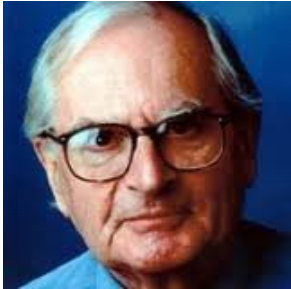




‘Scientific papers in the form in which they are communicated to learned journals are notorious for misrepresenting the processes of thought that led to whatever discoveries they describe’  
- Sir Peter Medawar



That was magic.  
That was marketing case-histories.  
That was truth.  
I wanted more.      -Jeremy Bullmore CBE



To believe in the thought processes described by the scientific papers or the marketing case histories is to be encouraged to approach the next problem in a manner that makes it least likely to be solved. And that's why it matters.



Why it matters even more today

# What we're looking for

## Yes please

- What really happened
- Stories about discovery
- Hearing how teams work together (including elements of conflict or anxiety)
- Acceptance of emergence as a positive thing

## No thank you

- Post-rationalisation
- Myths about control
- Stories that perpetuate power relations or suppress disagreements
- Embarrassment at 'making mistakes' or 'failing'

A process of discovery and  
learning...

Starting here, tonight