Innovations in Strategy Crafting

Robert Brodnick, Ph.D.

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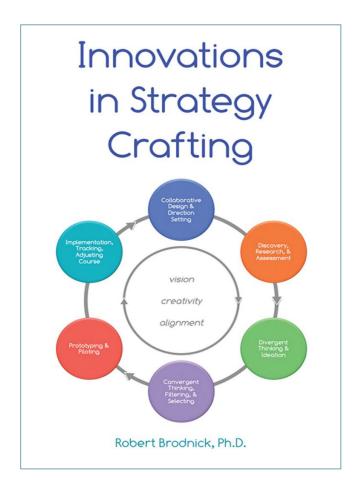Certain stock imagery © Getty Images.

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CONTENTS

Innovations in Strategy Crafting

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Robert Brodnick, Ph.D., a recognized thought leader in the field, draws on his strengths in strategy, innovation, facilitation, design thinking, and organizational development and change to help today's organizations thrive in a time of uncertainty and complexity.

Each chapter contains applicable tools and detailed graphics that the author has used in his work with organizations across industries, at the university level, as the co-founder of Sierra Learning Solutions, and with his collaborators.

The author — with help from collaborators — explores the fundamental patterns that compose the world in which we live, how we can apply both the arts and mathematics to strategy, how turbulence can be used constructively when crafting strategy, and what he believes may be the next innovations in strategy crafting.

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CHAPTER 13

Positive Turbulence
with Stan Gryskiewicz

For this chapter, I am collaborating with colleague and mentor Stan Gryskiewicz on the topic of Positive Turbulence. Stan literally wrote the book on *Positive Turbulence* and we will apply the concepts he established to the practice of strategy crafting. Over his career, Stan was instrumental in founding the Center for Creative Leadership and the Association for Managers of Innovation as well as creating significant organizational impact as a consultant and coach. In the first section, we review the concept of Positive Turbulence (PT) and discuss the assumptions and context important to understanding the concept as applied to organizations. We then move on to explore how you can create Positive Turbulence and use it to help drive strategy and organizational change. The final section gets specific about the role of Positive Turbulence in Strategy Crafting.

What is Positive Turbulence?

Turbulence, Generally. Taken literally, we observe turbulence all of the time in nature; it is a property of physical systems observed in fluids like air and water. Turbulence is characterized by irregular changes in pressure and velocity. It is the opposite of smooth, laminar flow. Imagine a slow flowing stream. In drops a leaf and as it moves downstream, its steady motion allows one to make a good guess at where it will be in 10 feet or even 100 yards downstream. Now the leaf passes under a wooden bridge and gets stuck in a small, swirling eddy behind the pillar

that holds up the bridge. The smooth flow was replaced by something unexpected and we can no longer predict what will happen. The flow of the water became turbulent, the leaf experienced the unexpected, and we as observer were surprised.

We see turbulence daily and it is commonly observed in natural phenomena such as water moving in our kitchens, in nature as surf or flowing streams, or in our atmosphere in clouds which we can feel during a bumpy flight. In the mind of the physicist, turbulence is caused by large amounts of motion energy within moving fluids that transforms the fluid system from laminar equilibrium to one of chaotic behavior. From this chaos comes turbulent flow, friction, drag, and unsteady swirls and vortices of varying sizes and scales. All hell breaks loose on the level of small particles in the fluid. It is nearly impossible to predict the future state of material caught in turbulent flow. Begin to imagine this metaphor applied to organizations.

There are three important characteristics of turbulence. One is irregularity – turbulent flows are always highly irregular and turbulent systems lack predictability. Determinism falls apart. We must think about the past and future of turbulent systems in terms of probabilities and forecasts, not calculated predictions. A second characteristic is diffusion - turbulence is accompanied by energetic forces that act to mix diverse things together rather than keep them separated in like groups. The third characteristic is chaos - turbulence is accompanied by disorder and confusion. Turbulent environments behave so unpredictably that they sometimes appear random. Other behaviors come with chaos such as sensitivity to small changes in initial conditions, fractal geometry, dynamic equilibrium, nonlinear system aperiodicity, and most importantly emergence. Emergence is a property of complex systems where new properties arise that were not found in the simple building blocks of the system (see chapter 11, Curves that Matter, for more about these properties of nonlinear complexity and how they apply to organizational strategy and change).

Positive Turbulence brings us back to the prediction part. Recall the leaf. Something happens when we move from smooth flow to turbulence, and indeed, the lack of ability to see the smooth flow and predict our outcomes can make many nervous. The insight is that sometimes, the outcome of unpredictability puts us in a better place in a more positive position. The true power of Positive Turbulence may be emergence. A property of a system is emergent if it cannot be explained by the properties of its components. The term emergent properties was coined by Broad in the 1920s "for those properties that emerge at a certain level of complexity but do not exist at lower levels". An example of an emergent property is that sugar tastes sweet although sweetness does not exist in the tastes of the individual carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen atoms that form sugar. Reductionism and analysis do not explain emergence very well, as these properties can only be examined holistically. Emergence was an issue that baffled Newtonian scientists for decades upon decades. In fact, it was the search for the roots of the emergent properties of matter that led physicists to understand the quantum nature of reality. Those that study complexity continue to identify more and more emergent properties in natural systems and many theorists now contend that phenomena such as new species, personality, consciousness, group behavior, culture, and life itself may well be emergent properties of natural systems.

> *Accelerated change is the destiny of the leaders of the future. It will not be an easy role to fill. Finding their way through complexity and making decisions along the way will require access to information which comes through open channels of turbulence. The leader's function will be to make difficult yet correct choices."*
>
> – Harlan Cleveland

Positive Turbulence and Complex Organizational Dynamics. Our focus here is on organizations, cultures, and communities not clouds and streams, however these are good metaphors to help us understand turbulence at play in more complicated social phenomena. To move from natural to organizational systems, we can borrow a potent lens

from the work of Gareth Morgan that he employed in his book *Images of Organization*. Morgan explored the nature of organizations through a collection of metaphors such as the Machine, the Living Organism, Brains, Cultures, Political Systems, Psychic Prisons, and Flux and Transformation. Two of these metaphors are useful to us here, that of the machine and that of flux.

The machine metaphor of organization is all around us. It is the industrial paradigm. It is Taylor's scientific management. It is Weber's theory of bureaucracy. It is command and control. It is still the way that many managers and leaders wield power, seek control, and flail and fail hopelessly in modern organizations. We know that this worldview is limited and faulty, but still we find a preponderance of organizations managed this way. Turbulence is one of the many phenomena we know about that provide evidence for the lack of completeness and usefulness in the machine metaphor.

Morgan's flux and transformation metaphor of organization posits that organizations are complex adaptive systems rife with chaos and turbulence. While harder to understand and apply, leaders and managers that operate from the perspective of complexity experience greater success in their organizations over the long run. The perspective of complexity gives leaders potent tools and one of these is Positive Turbulence.

Positive Turbulence describes a climate that values and seeks novelty. Positive Turbulence mixes novelty with the known and the familiar resulting in an energizing tone compatible with change by providing stimuli to motivated people who are looking for ways to make their own contributions to the renewal and success of the organization. Leaders who foster creativity in organizations create a culture that values and seeks novelty from the outside.

Positive Turbulence includes outside forces that impact change that an organization must be aware of and use in order to stay ahead of the competition and remain a coveted provider of relevant services. These outside forces can include a changing marketplace, the economy, new

technology, the competition, shifting demographics, social–cultural–political, and others that may be unique to any single organization. Any organization that keeps on the lookout for these changes in peripheral forces, brings the awareness in and channels these forces into innovation. Thus Positive Turbulence becomes a source for innovative products, services, and processes.

Positive Turbulence is an energizing climate that draws organizations towards a directed change. It provides stimuli to motivated people looking for ways to make their own contributions towards the success of the enterprise. Creative leaders set the tone for this culture by recognizing the need for an environment that produces change. Creative leaders manage change before change manages them. While many traditional managers and leaders focus intently on their own organizations, we recognize that many of the sources of change come from outside their organizations. The sources are troublesome because one may have little or no control over the changes they bring.

Creative leaders create the meaning, set the tone for this culture, and help guide a climate compatible with change. This reality has always been present but now that we operate in a global context with accelerating technologies, the changes come faster and from more exotic sources than ever before in history. Positive Turbulence begins with the recognition that change is inevitable. It then provides ways to keep change manageable and apply it to an organization's strategic advantage.

Learning About Positive Turbulence. So far, we have explained what turbulence is generally, described the kinds of turbulence that are positive, and set our discussion firmly within the context of organizations. Now, let us add a few more terms, concepts, and a brief story to help round out the description.

- <u>Difference</u> – incorporating programs and information that is new and unexpected.
- <u>Multiple Perspectives</u> – divergent viewpoints to see in new ways.

- <u>Intensity</u> – the experience of speed, volume, and force and ability to manage their intensity coming in to the organizational system.
- <u>Receptivity</u> – how individuals respond to the turbulence that includes their style, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity.
- <u>New Possibilities</u> – A turbulent environment can be seen as a reservoir of new ideas. A growing group of practitioners (beginning with the military) call it a VUCA environment – volatile, uncertain, chaotic, and ambiguous. Sort through the turbulence experienced in your organizations and turn that into a positive force for renewal. The behavior is to welcome variance, expand your field of of vision, see opportunity, and learn to embrace change.
- <u>Acting in Fresh Ways</u> – Creativity, innovation, and change do not have to be dictated by having problems to solve, patchwork repair, and chance. Creative leaders can put in place organizational structures that provide more predictable, ongoing sources of information that can be used for renewal. This means putting mechanisms in place for bringing in new information, then making relevant sense and producing new and useful ideas.

Creating and Using Positive Turbulence

Stan's book *Positive Turbulence* yields a deep dive into the concept and dynamics of PT and includes strategies for increasing receptivity to Positive Turbulence, developing Positive Turbulence in teams, and managing Positive Turbulence. In this section, we extract what we call the *top ten tips* for creating and using Positive Turbulence.

> *A company can't be creative when it employs a group of homogenous people. Creativity and innovation come from putting unlike people (and their ideas) together. To compete globally, our people must seek out different perspectives.*
>
> – R. Sohlberg, VP, Norsk Hydro

1. **Pay Attention to the Periphery.** Most organizations have a natural boundary that exists between what we consider to be part of the organization and what we consider to be outside the organization. This boundary demarks the periphery. What is going on outside your organization by definition comes in contact with your organization at its periphery. The periphery is outside the firewall of your organization and is the source of advance information on the trends of change. Residing out on the periphery of the awareness of individuals, teams, and the organization are ideas and experiences that have the potential to revolutionize what is within. In our experience, the amount of time spent out on the periphery is proportional to the amount of creativity and innovation you find. You can be intentional about increasing the interchange of ideas and flow of information across organizational boundaries to create Positive Turbulence. For individuals, this can be stimulated simply by reading outside your field of expertise, traveling and living in new countries, or driving a new way to work in the morning and in each setting being truly open to what you experience and harvesting insights. Out on the periphery leaders must move from an analytic mindset and framework to one of pattern recognition and blended intuition. When framing this information know you must take low amplitude, low frequency, static filled signals from the periphery and give them the potential for meaning and usefulness in the organizational context. We should not dismiss this turbulence as disruptive and tipping you out of your comfort zone – you ignore this information at your peril. Further on the organizational level, we can work to ensure groups and individuals are open to off-center perspectives, seek to open innovation and strategic thinking to outside influence and collaboration, and broaden knowledge and experience through formal and informal learning programs and experiences.

2. **Encourage Nonlinear Thinking.** While linear thinking is predictable and controllable, it works against the benefits of Positive Turbulence. We suggest that individuals and organizations explore, encourage, and reinforce broader ways of thinking to include design thinking (a fresh approach to problem solving and innovation), orbital thinking (an indirect way of learning associated with the

arts), storytelling (especially from other cultures), and other kinds of nonlinear thinking. We know for example, that children are natural nonlinear thinkers, and that much of our schooling is designed to shift them from more novel and unexpected ways of seeing the world to more expected and "correct" ways to think and behave. Some of the most creative children share experiences and perspectives growing up that we should consider as re-training ground for Positive Turbulence in our organizations. These include early granting of unusual freedom, frequent moves living in different cities and preferably around the world, an abundance of effective adults around as role models, and the expectation that children will act independently but responsibly. What are the adult parallels for our own organizations? To further encourage nonlinear thinking in our organizations, we should encourage cross-fertilization in teams, create safe spaces for encouraging free-ranging Ideas, and find ways to fund travel and diverse experiences.

3. **New Patterns of Communication.** There are many forces that act to insulate our organizations and drive us to predictable patterns of thinking and behavior, and we know that the periphery is a source of turbulence to help disrupt complacency and expected thoughts and behaviors. Much of this is driven by the communication patterns that we establish and reinforce. By paying attention to communication and making subtle changes, we can enhance Positive Turbulence. Combining communication and the periphery, we can facilitate the flow of outside information inward by utilizing outside experts, and in the emerging gig economy, employees that are more transient and less grounded in any on organization or team. Both kinds of individuals carry with them new ideas, new ways of thinking, and new skills that can disrupt patterns that can be less helpful. Broadly, we can implement and reward structures that compel managers and employees at all levels to communicate with each other and inject novelty as appropriate. We know that workers in our new economy are more mobile and while this threatens knowledge management and corporate secrets and IP, this flow has advantages. We can enhance the flow within reason by systematically recruiting people

from other companies and industries to introduce other perspectives. Even further, training programs in diversity and interdisciplinarity helps drive Positive Turbulence. Finally, elevating creativity in our cultures signals open exchange of novelty and fresh ideas. Traditional organizational cultures and bureaucracies can frustrate creative types, limiting communication, expression, and idea exchange. We should find places for creative people and support them in their efforts, even if at times their work and outcomes may not perfectly fit traditional expectations.

4. **Embrace Change and Diversity.** There are so many forces in our organizations that induce regularity, stability, and norms and while they help organizations function, they dampen the benefits of Positive Turbulence. We tend to select and train our organizational members based on sameness, fit, and matching skill sets with needs. These processes, while supportive of functions and specific job duties of the larger machine, all limit diversity and protect us from change. The natural processes of growth, evolution, and change help our organizations evolve and respond to new conditions, markets, and technologies, yet we more often act to suppress these considering them instabilities or negative forces. By seeking to maximize diversity and embrace change and use it to thrive, we can reap the benefits of turbulence. On the individual level, we should help others develop their powers of receptivity and reciprocity. Over time, the cumulative effects shift organizational culture and help us foster tolerance of ambiguity and invite multiple perspectives. From the richness of a culture open to change and desirous of diversity, we can create a environment ready for, and embracing of, Positive Turbulence.

5. **Open Flow for the Arts and Technology.** As a culture, we are biased toward the latest and greatest technologies and tools, but deep down we know that our tolerance for new ideas is not as great as it could be. Adoption of new ideas, tools, and technologies starts slowly and as word spreads and success mounts, growth accelerates until the need saturates. Over time, the adoption of new ideas, tools,

and technologies slows dramatically and a saturation point arises, eventually the desire for the ideas or technology wanes and slows to a trickle or stops. We can use our knowledge of these adoption cycles to enhance Positive Turbulence. Our work should be targeted at both ends – first at the beginning of the cycle, we can help open our organizational systems and individual members to new technologies and fresh approaches by lowering the cost of entry, supporting risk and failure, and opening flow from the periphery. Then at the other end of the cycle where we see ideas saturating, we can find ways to repurpose tools and thinking, or to expedite their exodus from our systems, creating opportunity for replacement by new ideas, tools, and technologies. A complementary approach is to leverage the arts and blend the methods and mindsets from the creative fields to help aid our tolerance of risk, how we tell stories and use metaphors, and see the future (for more on this see Chapter 12). By using and combining the arts and technologies, we can better open our cultures to turbulence and keep it producing positive outcomes.

6. **Bring Positive Turbulence to Teams.** One of the most valuable and effective approaches for Positive Turbulence, and a great starting point for the novice, is to bring PT to teams and working groups. For the team manager or leader, there are some recommendations for building and growing teams: maintain a diverse membership, promote informal information exchanges, and seize opportunities for cross-fertilization. Positive Turbulence in teams can be stimulated further by breaking up long-time membership of teams by inserting members with new experiences, personality types, skills sets and disciplines, and roles. We have found that there are four key points of leverage for Positive Turbulence in teams. Freedom: Do people have time to discuss new ideas? Is there a perception that ideas will be considered? Is there a framework for including the initiatives of groups and/or individuals? Is there an expectation to be creative? Challenge: Do people feel responsible for thinking of better ways to do their jobs? Does management know what motivates employees? How satisfied are people by the work they do? Is the task intrinsically motivating? Encourage: Are people encouraged to take risks even

if they may fail? Think of the last time someone made a mistake – what happened? When something goes wrong on a project, what is the first reaction of those on the responsible team? How frequently and for what purpose does senior management visit with individuals and/or groups? <u>Resource</u>: Do the resources available provide a competitive advantage? How easily are budgets approved? Does anyone have discretionary funds available to try new ideas? To what level down in the organization do these funds extend? Have groups and/or individuals ever asked for and received special funding after a project began?

7. **Keep Turbulence Positive.** We have learned that since turbulence is unavoidably dancing in every organization's periphery, why not stir the turbulence around you into your organization as an agent of self-renewal and constructive change? Be proactive. Renew your industry and your organization by using the turbulence around you to create the capacity to continually renew and keep turbulence positive. Just as turbulence can light our individual and organization fires, it can douse the flames just as easily exposing us to the negative effects of turbulence. Keeping turbulence positive is a three step process that never seems to end. Initially, we need to become adept at recognizing turbulence (step one) and then learn how to continually connect cause with effect (step two), qualifying the outcomes of turbulence along a spectrum from wholly negative to positive. The final step is becoming a co-creator of turbulence and favoring the positive kinds, while suppressing the negative kinds. This is no simple feat and we do not have a wholly repeatable recipe. It is an art as much as a science, a pathway that you choose to walk down. It gets easier the further you journey and the more you share your stories with others.

8. **Manage the Intensity of Turbulence.** What are the structures or processes that can be put in place that allow all levels of the organization – the individual, the team, and the organization – to interact with novelty? Assume the individual or the team knows his or her area of expertise and that expertise just needs to be exposed to novelty. This marriage produces a novel association and therefore

a creative idea for the person or team or an innovation in the case of an organization. All of these interactions have a degree or intensity as experienced by the individual and the team. Too much turbulence and we tend to get more negative than positive outcomes. Not enough turbulence and we can see no effects at all. Managing the intensity of turbulence is an even finer art than simply keeping it positive, but the two interact. Every organization at every time has a certain amount of turbulence it needs to capture and utilize to make successful progress towards its destination. Our challenge as leaders or agents in our organizational systems, is to try to create the right amount, to manage the intensity, and to keep it positive. The good news is that we have some simple levers to help us do this. For our leaders, we can seek to balance their training and development with both creativity and management skills. In our processes, we can seek to balance balance idea generation, with prototyping, with implementation and ensure we have ways to learn about each along the way. In our physical and virtual working spaces, we can seek to balance the simple with novel, create informal meeting spaces, and be open to surprise.

9. **Ensure Periods of Renewal.** Positive Turbulence creates an environment that upsets the status quo of an organization and that results in change. The paradox is to invite an energizing, disparate, invigorating, unpredictable force into your organization so that you can use its chaotic energy to direct patterns and cycles of continuous change and renewal. Change is difficult and it has consequences on individuals, teams, and the organization as a whole. While necessary to maintain alignment with the broader ecosystem in which we are embedded and operate, constant turbulence can be intolerable and lead to the demise of our organization. To fight this fatigue it is critical to promote continual health and ensure periods of renewal. Renewal can be resting, taking a break from change, in the form of vacations, retreats, and simply a period of time where things are not changing very fast. However a more sophisticated form of renewal is enhanced and accelerated learning. One approach is to embed a feedforward

learning cycle in the organization. We are all aware of feedback, being reflective about past experiences and using this awareness to guide future behavior and outcomes. The feedforward learning cycle is a method for Positive Turbulence. This involves pre-sensing emerging futures and working to respond, assimilate, and accommodate possibilities that are not yet fully apparent in our organizations and our environments. This is a fundamental concept in the Futuring method and using PT for strategy and innovation. More on this later.

10. **Be Intentional About Positive Turbulence as Strategy.** Few but the most crafty leaders and organizations have formal processes in place to create and manage Positive Turbulence. We advocate, however, that all organizations become practiced and intentional about using Positive Turbulence as a strategy for organizational development and change. This likely happens in stages and initially the early stage is simply, and playfully, experimenting with the recommendations we offer here. Beyond the initial experimentation, a characteristic of more robust strategy is evidenced by sparking synergy among employees. Stage two, sees organizational members starting to do it on their own, either intentionally or unintentionally. It is a sign that the culture is beginning to be impacted. Latter stages may include more formal organizational structures such as establishing channels for overseeing turbulence, solidifying managerial support for Positive Turbulence, and eventually setting up the Office of Positive Turbulence (ok, we are completely kidding about that last one). In the end, we know, like it or not, in today's organizations we create what we measure. Positive Turbulence can be tracked in organizations measured by these four (or more) elements: 1) difference, breaking out of the status quo; 2) multiple perspectives, inviting divergent viewpoints and nontraditional interpretations; 3) intensity, keeping the speed, volume, and force of the turbulence at an optimal level for change; and 4) receptivity, by providing mechanisms for individuals to thrive in an environment driven by Positive Turbulence.

ROBERT BRODNICK, PH.D.

The Role of Positive Turbulence in Strategy Crafting

We hope that the first two sections of this chapter have introduced you to the concepts of turbulence, generally, and Positive Turbulence as an organizational dynamic. We also summarized our learnings about PT so that you can apply them to create and use Positive Turbulence on your own or help your organization learn more. This final section explores and unpacks the learnings about Positive Turbulence very specifically as they relate to the strategy crafting process by outlining six roles PT can play.

Strategic Planning Process Design Incorporating Positive Turbulence. In chapter 4, *A Designer's Approach to Strategy Crafting*, we learned that strategy creation can occur over four stages (design-diverge-converge-align). Positive Turbulence plays a role in each of the four stages in many ways. During design, our job is to consider how we intentionally use the learnings in each of the subsequent three stages. Like in all things, organizations have a limited tolerance for turbulence in the planning process and the task during design is to try to balance the amount of PT, keeping just short of chaos that may produce negative turbulence. While this can be adjusted, moderated or enhanced midstream, consideration during design allows an organization to do the necessary prework to ensure success. We noted earlier that there are three important characteristics of turbulence and one of these is diffusion, energy that acts to mix diverse things together rather than keep them separated in like groups. Turbulence and divergence are a perfect match. During the idea generation stage of strategy crafting, Positive Turbulence should be frequently applied in the form of information flows from the periphery, agitation of patterns of thinking and behavior, and moving individuals in and out of their normal work groups. The resulting chaos helps foster emergence; as Broad observed, "properties [can] emerge at a certain level of complexity but do not exist at lower levels". We capture emergent ideas and refine them during the third stage in strategy crafting, convergence. And finally, as we seek to create organizational alignment to enact the strategies crafted, we must disrupt the existing organizational patterns that produced the results of the past and rearrange them so they can create the results of the future. Positive Turbulence lives through implementation and can help teams function better, enhance required communication, and drive nonlinear thinking.

Ideation and the Turbulator. A very specific suggestion for using Positive Turbulence in strategy crafting is employing what we call the "turbulator". Technically, a turbulator is a device that turns a laminar flow into a turbulent flow, in mechanical things like airplane wings, heat exchangers, and arrows. Planners can use turbulators as individuals brought into the strategy crafting process to intentionally create instability in thinking, disrupt normal patterns of behavior, challenge norms and expected responses, and be watchful for moments when things simply get too calm. Here are a few examples from the list of ideation techniques given in the Ideation and Divergence chapter. An easy role for a turbulator to play is during group brainstorming where they can observe patterns in responses and offer either ideas that disrupt the pattern, seem quite ridiculous, or explore areas from which nothing has yet been offered. In storyboarding, a storytelling technique in which images or pictures are used to convey a narrative, turbulators can offer up forks in the road of the story's narrative at points where alternatives or parallel narratives might yield insight. During mind mapping, building a diagram to represent the collection of ideas as well as their relationships to each other, turbulators can look for patterns, connect things yet unconnected, or offer up challenges like "what would this look like in 3D". In brainwriting, an idea generation technique that mixes together individual time with group time spent in writing down and building on ideas, turbulators can take a pass in disrupting storylines with insights or switch the settings of stories or ideas to explore how it might work for different kinds of stakeholders. And finally, in role playing turbulators can play the role of the jester, revealing what may be hidden or uncomfortable yet done in a humorous way. Also, at any time in any kind of ideation, the turbulator can employ the worst-idea technique, injecting 180 degree alternatives to offset and reset the group's thinking in order to inspire further idea generation.

Enhanced Flow From the Periphery. Methods for strategy creation have relied on the flow of information from outside the organization for a very long time. Processes like environment scanning, data collection and analysis, and forecasting and trend reports have become staples of traditional strategic planning. Positive Turbulence transforms traditional techniques from a slow burning candle into jet fuel on fire. Where traditional scans use data reports in categories like PESTE (political, economic, social, technical, environmental),

the concept of flow from the periphery used in Positive Turbulence greatly enhances the breadth, depth, volume, and quality of the experience. Not only are we creating a one-way flow of data, PT induces an interchange awareness, co-learning and co-creation of ideas and opportunities, and individual growth and development. An organization that has optimized the flow from the periphery is fundamentally and noticeably different from one that occasionally scans and absorbs part of what they learn. Change happens more quickly and more easily. While strategy crafting, during the discovery and divergence stages, the aperture of the lens needs to be widened to increase the chance of novelty, and during the convergence stage, the impact of the flow needs to be sharpened and condensed, focused on strategy refinement and utility. Given the accelerations we observe in modern life and the VUCA (volatile, uncertain, chaotic, and ambiguous) nature of our global society, we increasingly need Positive Turbulence and enhanced flow from the periphery to craft potent and successful strategies.

Nonlinearity and Implementation. Many innovations and strategic plans that we have seen over the years make the assumption that implementation will follow an expected step-by-step linear pathway. In reality, we know that the true path we experience will be nonlinear. Mintzberg realized this and helped us understand the difference between what he called deliberate versus emergent strategy. In linear strategic planning, organizations develop intended strategies and move deliberately to implementation. We know however, that turbulence causes irregularity where systems lack predictability, determinism falls apart, and calculated predictions miss their mark. Because the world is nonlinear, volatile, and complex, the results of deliberate execution are a mixed bag. Some are realized and some are unrealized. The emergent properties of the complex, nonlinear world contribute to the outcomes, which often are quite different from what was intended at the onset. Even though Mintzberg explored deliberate and emergent strategy, most plans assume linearity and default to the deliberate approach. By applying Positive Turbulence in strategy crafting and implementation planning, we can mitigate the risks of failure through bad assumptions and expected linear implementation. We shift from predictions to forecasts, the future becomes a cloud of possibilities where we can at best place likelihoods on the outcomes. Like the weather forecast, we need to continually watch the

forces shift in the systems and change the forecast regularly. Implementation in a nonlinear, VUCA world requires responsive strategy.

Turbulence as a Driver of Change. Most strategies require some form of organizational change. After all, why craft strategy if you want everything in the future to be the same as everything in the past? Positive Turbulence can be a useful tool in the change process. Here, we will reference the simple, ubiquitous model for organization change put forward by Kurt Lewin in the 1940s. Lewin's model has three stages that he called unfreezing, change, and refreezing. The model assumes that to create change, we must unfreeze the forces, structures, and processes in our organization that hold current behaviors and activities in place producing the outcomes they produce. The change itself in Lewin's model is actually the easy part. Then the third stage is refreezing the new forces, structures, and processes so that the organization doesn't revert to the prior state. The change is successful when the refreezing takes hold and produces different results. Positive Turbulence is a wonderful tool for unfreezing. You can use all ten of the tips we discussed to help an organization unfreeze.

Cycles of Chaos, Change, and Renewal. Like in any organizational application, Positive Turbulence can be overdone and lead to stress and negative turbulence, essentially bad results from agitation. The same applies to innovation and strategy crafting. Constant planning, revisioning, and turbulence can lead to a lack of clarity and priorities for employees. We recommend that in your strategy crafting over the long term, you intentionally cycle through periods of planning using turbulence and change through chaos, followed by renewal through rest. Again, this can be more of an art than a science, yet there are indicators that can help guide these natural cycles. When employees are unable to focus, contribute, offer new ideas, or cannot seem to continue to engage, they may be saturated. Organizationally, if turnover increases dramatically, brands suffer, or missions drift too far, it may be that too much change is happening. The goal is the find the optimal connection of Positive Turbulence to continuous innovation and strategic planning and help these cycles fit together. Many organizations create strategy cycles of three to five years. In highly technical environments, we know that the change cycle needs to be shorter as the

acceleration in technology innovation requires more frequent strategy crafting. When dealing with facilities or urban and physical structures, the planning cycles need to be longer since the lifetimes of infrastructure need to be long enough to justify costs and investments. There are a multitude of reasons for shorter or longer cycles, but by continually assessing individual, group, and organizational readiness weighed against the rate of change in the organization's multiple environments, you can seek the right balance of turbulence, change, and renewal.

In conclusion. We set out to review the concept of Positive Turbulence and discuss the assumptions and context important to understanding the concept as applied to organizations. We then moved on to explore uses of Positive Turbulence to help drive strategy and organizational change and got very specific about the role of Positive Turbulence in Strategy Crafting. We hope some of our ideas resonated with you and we encourage you to begin to play with Positive Turbulence. And lastly, we invite you to a dialog with us, let us know what you learned, or ask questions when we might be able to help. We all continue to learn as we engage our world.

> *A learning journey is a custom designed set of experiences, spanning several days, that immerse a group in other cultures and with remarkable individuals. It is a way to "get out" and move beyond familiar and comfortable environments to learn how to observe with new eyes – simply see the world in a totally different light. This is a territory from where new perspectives – on specific issues, the current reality, or the emerging future – are gained.*
>
> – Anna Muoio

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Robert Brodnick has three decades of experience with organizational strategy, change, and innovation. In Innovations in Strategy Crafting, he combines the best thinking in traditional planning with new tools from the world of innovation and design to create new approaches for the executive, strategist, practitioner, and student of organizational change. He is a practicing consultant in the areas of strategy, innovation, and organizational change and works with organizations of all kinds to help them envision and realize their futures.

Rob is a recognized thought leader and delivers workshops, keynotes, online courses, and teaches at the university level. He holds a Ph.D. in Psychoeducational Processes from Temple University and enjoys teaching courses in education, the social sciences, and business. He has continuing special interest in innovation management, creativity, design-thinking applications, and new models of adult learning. He co-founded Sierra Learning Solutions as a platform for related tools and services.