

Espejo, R. (2011). "Seeing a case study through a cybernetic epistemological lens" *Kybernetes* 40(9/10): 1273 - 1296.

Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to contribute to the understanding of the knowledge that Beer's viable system model helps when applied to the study of change processes in organisations.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper develops a case study constructed on interviews and shared reflections by the author and a key player in the company. Aspects of the case study are then seen with an epistemological lens.

Findings – While it is apparent that ideas, purposes, values or policies depend on resources to happen, this paper argues that it is necessary their embodying in effective relations to succeed creating and producing desirable meanings.

Research limitations/implications – Some forms of embodiment are more effective than others. The viable system model offers embodiment criteria to increase the chances of a successful production of ideas, purposes, values and policies, and the case study shows that for this purpose a limitation is transforming long-established relationships.

Originality/value – This paper uses a particular and unique situation to illustrate through the viable system model some of the general difficulties that organisations face in achieving desirable transformations.

Keywords Viable System Model, Epistemology, Embodiment, Organisational systems, Communications

Paper type Case study