increased. The inventive individual came to be understood not as an independent entrepreneur but as a self-actualizing, intrinsically motivated individual. His or her value to the company—the new products and ideas they produced—was not an effect of their relationship to the means of production but rather their possession of the trait of creativity. If the independent inventor-entrepreneur was the tragic hero of the first act of Schumpeter's and Whyte's narrative of American capitalism, fated to go the way of the yeoman farmer and the cowboy, the creative person, it was hoped, would be the hero of the comedic resolution in which the individual and the corporation would come to understand one another, agree to resolve their differences, and live together profitably ever after.

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Matthew J. Hoffarth

Executive Burnout

The postwar era gave rise to a whole slew of management ideas (a number of which are covered in the other essays in this roundtable) that sought to restore individuals, in all their emotional and psychological complexity, to management thinking. Authors such as Abraham Maslow, Douglas McGregor, and Chris Argyris believed that managers and employees should have a deep personal connection with work and conceived of management as a job largely conducted on a personal level—dealing not with "workers" but with "people." By the 1970s, however, some of the darker implications of that belief were beginning to manifest themselves; in particular, emotional investment could be particularly taxing. It was at this time that the business world had to contend with a new problem: burnout.

Herbert Freudenberger, the psychologist who coined the term, said that burnout affected "the dedicated and the committed," those who "feel a pressure from within to work and help and . . . feel a pressure from the outside to give."[28] Characterized by emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and

[28] Herbert J. Freudenberger, "Staff Burn-Out," *Journal of Social Issues* 30, no. 1 (1974): 161.

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a loss of accomplishment, burnout was first identified in the so-called helping professions—for example, nursing, education, and social work—where dealing with the chronic issues of one's clients often led to frustration and despair. However, by the early 1980s, as the service sector expanded to account for the lion's share of the U.S. economy, many corporate jobs had come to be seen as vulnerable to the problems of close interpersonal contact. As a result, popular news outlets began to depict burnout as an epidemic of national proportions, one that was no longer isolated to the hospital or the school but had spread to the office park, conference room, and corner office.[29]

Anxiety about the hidden toll of nonmanual labor dates back to diagnoses of neurasthenia at the beginning of the industrial age, and it intensified with the explosion of white-collar work in the postwar era, often under the banner of "stress."[30] In the case of burnout, many psychologists, business scholars, and journalists said it stemmed from a mismatch between a person's expectations of self-fulfillment on the job and the oft-mundane reality of working with other people in a large organization. For example, journalist Rebecca Radner, writing for the Bank of America employee magazine, suggested that burnout was on the rise because of a "growing shift from the work ethic to the 'worth' ethic," which led employees to "expect more personal fulfillment from their jobs than ever before."[31] On account of the emphasis on self-development and self-realization in American culture in the 1970s, the baby-boomer generation was said to be at particular risk of burning out. This risk was compounded for managers by the fact that they were expected to govern, guide, and direct the emotions and interactions of their subordinates. By the early 1980s, managers and executives had become the intended audience for much of the popular and scholarly burnout literature.

In this article, I focus on how burnout was "sold" to managers, that is, how they were encouraged to understand their effectiveness in terms of their emotional capacity to deal with the interpersonal aspects of work. Scholars promoted techniques and therapies that would help executives achieve "self-awareness," which they saw as the principal way to combat

[29] See, e.g., Lance Morrow, "The Burnout of Almost Everyone," *Time*, 21 Sept. 1981, 84.

[30] For works on the history of neurasthenia and stress, see Eric Caplan, *Mind Games: American Culture and the Birth of Psychotherapy* (Berkeley, 1998); Dana Becker, *One Nation under Stress: The Trouble with Stress as an Idea* (New York, 2013); Russell Viner, "Putting Stress in Life: Hans Selye and the Making of Stress Theory," *Social Studies of Science* 29, no. 3 (1999): 391–410; and Elizabeth Siegel Watkins, "Stress and the American Vernacular: Popular Perceptions of Disease Causality," in *Stress, Shock, and Adaptation in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David Cantor and Edmund Ramsden (Rochester, N.Y., 2014).

[31] Rebecca Radner, "Burn Out: When You Can't Do Your Job—and Don't Know Why," *BankAmerican*, Jan. 1980, 3.

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burnout. Responding to reports of widespread exhaustion and dissatisfaction within the executive ranks, some management scholars recommended not less work but rather *less emotional involvement* in work. To protect the organization and its employees, managers were told to take care of themselves first, monitoring and managing their own negative perceptions of the work environment. By doing this, they could act as role models for others and avoid the pitfalls of emotional interaction with the staff. The result was a proliferation of articles on managerial burnout in popular, scholarly, and trade publications, promoting the idea that the solution to the burnout epidemic was to liberate managers and executives from the emotions of their staff.

The Birth of Burnout

Freudenberger, a psychoanalyst and founder of the East Village Free Clinic in New York City, was the first person to use the term "burn-out" to describe the feeling of being overburdened and underappreciated at work. Fearful of sustained emotional interactions between his staff and the clients of the clinic—many of whom were drug users with mental health issues—Freudenberger warned that burnout was likely to affect the most dedicated workers at the clinic; it was the professional who had a "tendency to over-identify with those he is working with and for," a person on a "self-sacrificing, dedication-to-others ego trip," who was most likely to succumb, he said.[32] For Freudenberger, helping others could be a sign of egotism: those who were overly committed to their jobs, who tried to achieve personal satisfaction by working with others, were often merely trying to make up for deficiencies in other areas of their lives. For these staff members, their clients and coworkers had become a means to the end of their own self-fulfillment, rather than ends in themselves.

Freudenberger believed that this overcommitment, the inability of some staff members to maintain a boundary between oneself and one's job, flourished in the absence of the right kind of leader. As opposed to the manager who motivated his subordinates through charisma, Freudenberger's ideal leader was a more modest person who had "come to grips with the fact that he cannot be the whole show" and who made it part of his character to "share his griefs, his disappointments, his hangups, and his frustrations with the people he works with."[33] In reaction to the "authoritarian leader" who had inspired fear and condemnation in

[32] Herbert J. Freudenberger, "The Staff Burn-Out Syndrome in Alternative Institutions," *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice* 12, no. 1 (1975): 77, 73.
[33] Ibid., 77.

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the postwar era, this new type of leader humanized himself and empowered his subordinates to exercise both self-direction and self-control.[34] Many prominent management scholars shared Freudenberger's vision at the time, including Michael Maccoby, who wrote that the successful leaders of the 1970s and 1980s would be "self-aware, conscious of their weaknesses as well as strengths, [and] concerned with self-development for themselves as well as others."[35]

Freudenberger worried that executives who did not fit into this mold of leadership would be "putting their organizations to work for them," using their coworkers to fulfill a psychological need that could, in fact, never be satisfied at work.[36] Such a person was heading for burnout "on a treadmill of his or her own devising, even though he or she ascribes it to external forces."[37] Writing for an audience of human resources professionals, Freudenberger warned that "people who are in the throes of burning out often fail to see their situation as stemming from inside themselves" and instead "complain about the organization and react cynically to whatever is suggested or attempted by others."[38] He warned his readers about the danger that even one person's burnout could pose, since "it can spread, like any burning thing, through an entire organization, leaving only ashes behind."[39] The most expedient solution was thus to help build up each employee's personal defenses, ensuring that burnout could not spread from one person to the rest of the staff. The search for self-actualization through work had put organizations in danger, creating a situation in which overcommitment could turn into burnout and spread throughout the staff. The solution was not a return to an impersonal professionalism—nor simply less work—but instead more self-monitoring and self-awareness. That the cure for burnout would happen on a personal, psychological level was now a given.

[34] Anxiety about authoritarian leadership became even more conspicuous following the publication of Theodor Adorno et al.'s *The Authoritarian Personality* in 1950. For works that supported a new vision of leadership, particularly in business, see, e.g., Chris Argyris, *Increasing Leadership Effectiveness* (New York, 1976); Warren G. Bennis, "Revisionist Theory of Leadership," *Harvard Business Review*, Jan./Feb. 1961, 26–28, 31, 34, 36, 146, 148, 150; and David C. McClelland and David Burnham, "Power Is the Great Motivator," *Harvard Business Review*, Mar./Apr. 1976, 100–110.

[35] Michael Maccoby, *The Leader: A New Face for American Management* (New York, 1981), 221.

[36] Herbert J. Freudenberger, "Burn-Out: The Organizational Menace," *Training and Development Journal* 31, no. 7 (1977): 27.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., 26.

[39] Ibid., 27.

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Burnout in Popular Business Literature

Freudenberger transitioned from writing mostly in psychoanalytic and social work journals to publicizing burnout in business periodicals and mass-market publications. For instance, in an article for *Nation's Business*, the official magazine of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Freudenberger and coauthor Geraldine Richelson told their readers that burnout affected "the leaders among us who have never been able to admit to limitations," those who "started out with great expectations and refused to compromise along the way."[40] Freudenberger said that the remedy for this type of burnout was to "learn to acknowledge that the world is the way it is and accepting that fact," to "come to terms with the nature of the world" in order to "get on with the business of refocusing ourselves."[41] In service of that aim, Freudenberger and Richelson paired their article with a fifteen-question burnout self-assessment, reminding readers that "the biggest single gift we can give ourselves [is] a quiet, readily-available commodity known as self-awareness," and that "to succeed in averting a burn-out, it's imperative that you monitor yourself."[42]

Sentiments of this nature were central to articles published by prominent business scholars in established management journals. Harry Levinson, industrial psychologist and professor at Harvard Business School, published his thoughts on managerial burnout in a 1981 *Harvard Business Review* article, "When Executives Burn Out." Levinson noted that professionals such as mental health workers and police officers—those who "work under severe pressure in people-oriented jobs for long periods of time"—were "prime victims" of burnout.[43] Managers, however, in addition to the problems faced by other types of professionals, also had to "cope with the least capable among the employees, with the depressed, the suspicious, the rivalrous, the self-centered, and the generally unhappy" and "balance these conflicting personalities and create from them a motivated work group."[44] These responsibilities made executive burnout that much more dangerous: if an executive burned out, it was likely to affect his or her subordinates, creating a ripple effect all the way down the corporate ladder. Therefore, Levinson suggested, managers who felt overwhelmed by the emotional demands of their job should "withdraw, get appropriate help, and place themselves

[40] Herbert J. Freudenberger and Geraldine Richelson, "How to Survive Burn Out," *Nation's Business*, Dec. 1980, 55.
[41] Ibid., 56.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Harry Levinson, "When Executives Burn Out," *Harvard Business Review*, May/June 1981, 73.
[44] Ibid., 77.

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first," viewing their own self-preservation as an act of protection of their subordinates.[45] And, in order to ensure that burnout did not occur in the first place, Levinson suggested leaders should "take time to publicly remove their halos" by "explaining their own struggles, disappointments and defeats to their subordinates so that the latter can view them more accurately."[46] Fearful that organizations were being threatened by a new cohort of workers looking for self-fulfillment, on the one hand, and by a lack of control over managers, on the other hand, Levinson and Freudenberger proposed "self-awareness" as a way to protect organizations from burnout.

Another article on managerial burnout was published in 1982 in the *California Management Review*, a publication directed toward "active managers, scholars, teachers, and others concerned with management" and thus intended to serve as a "bridge between creative thought about management and executive action."[47] In "Executives under Fire: The Burnout Syndrome," Morley Glicken, professor of social welfare at the University of Kansas, and Katherine Janka, management consultant and business journalist, argued that because "burnout at managerial levels is likely to affect workers at lower levels," their article would focus exclusively on managers and executives.[48] While they noted that burnout was "suddenly a major concern in American industry and government," they lamented a lack of differentiation between being "burned out" and being "burned up."[49] Whereas the burned-up individual was destined for "mental and physical illness, sudden resignation, or involuntary termination," the burned-out executive could be treated for his or her exhaustion while on the job.[50] However, Glicken and Janka noted, "In the absence of either organizational assistance or individual competence for self-help, many executives facing burnout inaccurately diagnose themselves as burned up."[51]

Glicken and Janka suggested that corporations try to reduce burnout by introducing a new type of therapy that they had developed. Glicken and Janka's Career Enhancement Therapy (CET) called for a two-day, eight-hour-a-day treatment program, attended by a group of twelve to fifteen executives. During each session, therapists and executives would discuss "the causes of burnout, techniques useful in changing

[45] Ibid., 81.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Excerpted from the credits page of the Spring 1982 issue of *California Management Review*.
[48] Morley D. Glicken and Katherine Janka, "Executives under Fire: The Burnout Syndrome," *California Management Review* 24, no. 3 (1982): 67.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid., 69.
[51] Ibid.

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burned-out behavior, and the treatment used to help individuals in the group learn to change their behavior."[52] They noted that the success of CET depended on executives becoming introspective and self-aware, able to "risk themselves by moving into a form of self and group evaluation," and that positive change could not occur until "group members begin to look carefully at their own behavior, share it with others, [and] establish awareness of the complexities of [their] behavior."[53] For Glicken and Janka, as for other scholars, relieving the problem of organizational burnout necessitated creating self-aware and, to a certain extent, self-involved leaders; "the individual and the organization both have a stake in assuring the health, productivity, and satisfaction of top-level executives," and so "when these factors are jeopardized by debilitating burnout, both share responsibility for positive action."[54]

The Leader as Role Model

In 1956, William Whyte published his classic study *The Organization Man*. Whyte did not protest the organization or organized work per se, but rather the "deification" of it; he called on Americans to stop "denying that there is . . . a conflict between the individual and the organization," noting that while "this denial is bad for the organization . . . it is worse for the individual."[55] Whyte's goal was not necessarily to liberate the individual from the organization, but instead to liberate workers from the belief that their interests and those of the group were aligned. In the decades that followed, a number of scholars influenced by—or integral to—humanistic management, such as Maslow, McGregor, and Argyris, took the critiques of Whyte and others and turned them toward the interests of business. At the core of their thinking was the notion that managers and executives could play a central role in reducing conflict between organization and employee; they could create an atmosphere in which "the individual can achieve his goals best by directing his efforts toward the success of the organization."[56] McGregor wrote that this kind of atmosphere was the product of a manager who practices self-control, who "develops his own strategy and discovers its value," such that "his subordinates are following his example, and . . . considering their own applications of the idea."[57]

[52] Ibid., 72.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] William H. Whyte Jr., *The Organization Man* (Garden City, N.Y., 1956), 14.
[56] Douglas McGregor, *The Human Side of Enterprise: Annotated Edition* (New York, 2006), 75.
[57] Ibid., 74, 102.

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Burnout emerged as a pathology of trying to integrate individuals with organizations; the solution, however surprising, was to link employees to the leaders of the group. The leader, practicing self-awareness and self-monitoring, could become a model of both how to deal with one's frustrations and how not to criticize the corporation but instead find fault with oneself. Burnout thus became, to a large extent, a humanistic management tool—one for managing managers and that could, in turn, manage the group. It ensured that employees would accept their inherent conflict with the organization but work diligently to become integrated with it; by following the leader, an employee could both work for the group and be an individual. If burnout became an issue in the 1970s because of a genuine concern about conflict between the individual and the organization, by the 1980s burnout became popular because of its utility as a management tool, convincing executives—and by extension, their subordinates—to practice self-monitoring, self-assessment, and self-therapy for their own benefit and that of the corporation.

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Kira Lussier

Managing Intuition

"Slowly but surely the tables are being turned on the 'organization man,'" heralded *Dun's Review and Modern Industry* in 1966.[58] The business world was entering the "age of the intuitive manager," a new type of leader who relied not on established procedures or analytical reasoning, but on the "visionary and anticipatory qualities" of intuition.[59] Once credited with economic prosperity, bureaucratic management structures—and the "organization men" who populated them—were now perceived as stifling innovation and impeding information

[58] John T. Kimball, "Age of the Intuitive Manager," *Dun's Review and Modern Industry* (Jan. 1966): 42.
[59] Ibid.

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