In March 2017, CMg Design, a graphic design and branding agency in Los Angeles, rebranded themselves and created a new website which has won several awards. I wrote about 90% of the approximately 6,500 words of copy on the new site. The website won an Award of Distinction, 2017 Communicator Awards, Website Features—Copy or Writing, from the Academy of Interactive & Visual Arts. Here are two examples:

**EXCELLENCE | DESIGN | CLIENT SERVICE**

**THE CORE OF CMG**

Creative problem solving is the essence of what we do. We partner with you to gain an understanding of your corporation: What is your mission, what are your goals? What do we need to know about where you have been, where you are now, and where you want to go?

We enthusiastically work with you to capture your company’s voice, communicate your message, and accurately and compellingly tell your story, through exceptional branding and design solutions.

A commitment to excellence, a passion for exceptional design, and a DNA-deep understanding of superior client service led Principals Julie Markfield and Greg Crawford to establish CMg Design in 1992. These elements continue to inform our work, and have been enriched by our experiences on a host of design projects over these 25 years.

**MDL LOBBY GRAPHICS**

With beautiful imagery of NASA projects that MDL has contributed to, the murals CMg designed enhance the experience of both employees and members of the public as they enter the building. The murals, along with displays in glass cases, communicate the function of the building and put a spotlight on the many units housed within MDL, even those tucked in obscure areas of the labyrinthine facility.
**Content Marketing**

*CMg Design*, a graphic design and branding agency in Los Angeles, features a short article each month on the *DesignMatters* page of their website, and sends an email with a link to their prospective clients. I write about 80% of the posts and copy edit 100%.

**Find Your Flow**

We all know how it feels to be in a state of flow, that wonderful mental harmony created when you are doing something you love, and the ratio of your skill to the challenge at hand is just right—enough so you are absorbed, but not frustrated. You have clarity about what to do next and how to do it, and your sense of time, and of self, disappears. It can happen when you are playing tennis, leading a seminar, cooking a meal, or cracking the problem delaying an important project. But what can you do to make achieving a state of flow more likely? Adam Fridman at *Inc.* turned to psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi for answers; Csikszentmihalyi coined the term “flow” in the 1970’s, when he first began doing research on this highly desirable, but often elusive, state of mind. One great technique he shares: create habits and routines whenever you can, to free up your brain for the fun stuff. Read Fridman’s article for other nuggets, and then get flowing!

*How Positive Psychology Transforms People and Organizations — The Academic View | Adam Fridman | Inc.*

**Innovation Inspiration**

There may not be a magic formula to conjure innovative inspiration out of thin air, but it is possible to create a conducive atmosphere. Innovation expert Jeff DeGraff describes the benefits of an innovation advisory board and offers an intriguing description of the ideal composition: members should all have extensive experience, but they should have varying perspectives and expertise, to foster productive conflict. DeGraff posits, “It is, after all, in the white spaces between disciplines where innovation happens. The object is to achieve a positive tension—a constructive conflict that leads to hybrid solutions.” And although DeGraff is describing an advisory board for an organization, his *Inc.* article got us thinking about adapting the concept for an individual’s professional development, or for a department within an organization. Who are your trusted advisors when it comes to plotting your career path, and how diverse are their perspectives? Could your department better tap into innovative practices by soliciting insights from individuals from other areas of your organization, or even outside of it?

*Assembling Your Innovation Advisory Board | Jeff DeGraff | Inc.*
The Magic of Iconic Design

Introduced in 1918, the trusty stand mixer many of us have in the kitchen wasn’t much of a success until 1937, when industrial designer Egmont Arens transformed the bulky KitchenAid into the sleek model we know today. Dozens of color choices and attachment options have been added over the years, but who would touch that design?

Now ubiquitous, it’s easy to forget that KitchenAid had to compete with others in its category first to survive, and then to achieve icon status. There is no definitive “How to Create an Icon” list, but we did note a commonality among many iconic designs: they either served their stated purpose incredibly well, or they did something extra that set them apart.

What Iconic Designs Do, Beyond Serving the Stated Purpose

- Evoke an emotion: pride, nostalgia, belonging, amusement, reassurance
- Appeal to the senses: look, sound, smell, taste, or feel amazing
- Provide a vivid reminder: of a time, place, event, or season
- Make a statement: style, wealth, allegiance, opinion, aspiration, excellence

And while qualities like durability, efficiency, and reliability often characterize an icon, if a design has enough else going for it, icon status can still be achieved without them. The British Jaguar automobile, introduced in 1935, had famously poor reliability ratings for decades, but its design, seen as quintessentially British, made it a sentimental favorite.

Consider these designs: paper clips, tree-shaped air fresheners, the yellow smiley face that was everywhere in the 1960s — far humbler than the KitchenAid stand mixer or Jaguar, they also became icons. That’s part of the magic of iconic design: it springs from across a spectrum of resources, talent, and meaning. But what determines which designs will become iconic, while others are left behind?

Simply put, the icons manage to scratch a particular itch in just the right way — do that something extra — and they often have marketers who leverage the mood of the times. Brazilian-based Havaianas, for example, took humble, very basic flip flops and catapulted them to icon status in the 1990s, when they introduced a range of styles at various price points, and flip flops have been going strong ever since. And now, how can you look at flip flops and not think of summer, swimming pools, and sunshine? Or think of summer, and not envision flip flops?
Iconic Designs in the Everyday

Think back to the last trip you took: images of new things you saw may pop up, anything from an imposing tall building down to an unusual menu design. And if you traveled beyond the U.S., you may have noticed that the set of walk/don’t walk signals in each country has its own distinctive look. In Germany, Berlin went even further, with a signal design unique and specific to the city itself—a case in point for the power of design, even in seemingly mundane objects.

Despite much joy over reunification of Germany in the early 1990s, the change was bittersweet for many former East Germans, who saw not only a border, but their culture, dissolving. Even their beloved crosswalk signals, jaunty red and green figures in wide-brimmed hats known as Ampelmännchen (traffic light men), were making way for their western cousins. Leave it to a designer to understand the power of this pair of East German icons, and to lead the effort to keep them on duty! Product designer Markus Heckhausen collaborated with the figures’ original designer, Karl Peglau, to shepherd the return of the little men to their posts (including navigating German bureaucracy), and there they have remained, more beloved than ever, and a symbol of united Berlin. Over time, other German cities have designed crosswalk signals celebrating their own uniqueness: Dürfen has puppets and Erfurt rotates among several figures. At CMg, we dream of the possibility of styling a new signal for our hometown of Pasadena. Roller skaters, perhaps?

This is why traffic lights are so much better in Germany | Judith Vonberg | CNN
The development of the East German Ampelmännchen | ampelmann.de

The IPO-Free Zone of Evergreen Entrepreneurs

Achieving an IPO may be the holy grail for many privately-held companies, but for Evergreen entrepreneurs, profitability and market leadership defines success; they prize independence and pursue longevity, not a quick exit with a bag of money. Bo Burlingham describes the Evergreen Movement in two fascinating pieces in the October issue of Inc. One article includes a short summary of the Evergreen 7Ps that define these entrepreneurs and companies: Purpose, Perseverance, People First, Private, Profit, Paced Growth, and Pragmatic Innovation. The other is a deep dive into the development of the Evergreen Movement, and the kind of entrepreneurs who comprise it.

The genesis of the Evergreen concept was venture capitalist Dave Whorton’s collaboration with entrepreneur Jessica Herrin, who wanted capital that would be paid back in profit distributions, rather than the sale of shares. Herrin was creating a business true to her passions, and planned to stay and build it, not sell it and move on to the next start up. More than 10 years later, Herrin is still at the helm of the highly-successful Stella & Dot. Whorton sought out other entrepreneurs who shared Herrin’s ethos, and last year launched the Tugboat Institute, a platform to serve them, and help these often-isolated leaders communicate with each other.

The 7 defining Characteristics of Evergreen Companies | Bo Burlingham | Inc.
How to Build a Company That Will Be Around in 2115 | Bo Burlingham | Inc.
The Challenge of the Unfamiliar

Doing something new doesn’t necessarily have to be beautiful in the eyes of the people who look at it. The result of doing something new is beautiful. The fact of doing something new and people being moved by it is what’s beautiful.

Rei Kawakubo

We all know the comfort of the known—a favorite sweater, a set of Monday morning tasks that gets us back into the swing of the work week, a new song that becomes a fast favorite because of the familiar rhythm. Our brains are wired for ritual, routine, repetition. But what about the discomfort of the unknown, the jolt of the new, the challenge of the unfamiliar? These questions got our minds humming as we encountered images from the recent Met Gala—this year, the annual fundraising event for the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York celebrated the work of avant-garde designer Rei Kawakubo, and many of the outfits worn on the red carpet were, well, outlandish, and provided fodder for late night comics. But what’s so funny?

While it’s easy to dismiss or mock something whose meaning is not immediately apparent, or that falls outside conventional norms or the cultures we are familiar with, doing so may cost us an opportunity to expand our vision and stretch our own creativity. Kawakubo’s clothing designs are the subject of the Costume Institute’s spring 2017 exhibition, Rei Kawakubo/Comme des Garçons: Art of the In-Between. Thomas P. Campbell, Director of The Met, credits Kawakubo with blurring the line between art and fashion and asking us to think differently about clothing. While many of the designs appear unwearable, others, some going decades back, feature design elements that have been adopted by other designers in more recent years. Asymmetry has become more pronounced in some clothing design, thanks to Kawakubo’s lead, and exposed seams, heavily featured in her work, have also become prevalent in more conventional fashion. She is credited by many in the fashion world with increasing the popularity of black over the last few decades.

Take a virtual spin through the exhibit, and perhaps it will trigger some fresh ideas in your own work, or a new approach to an old problem.

Rei Kawakubo/ Comme des Garçons: Art of the In-Between | Metropolitan Museum of Art
Hot Sauce, Hot Brand

Reading this at home or at work? Check the refrigerator, and chances are, a green-topped, clear plastic bottle of red hot sauce, featuring a white drawing of a rooster, is in there; tables at many eateries sport this brand, too. How did Huy Fong Sriracha become so ubiquitous? Robert Klara at *Adweek* shares our fascination with this unusual brand story, and profiled Huy Fong Foods and its founder, David Tran, in an article earlier this year. Many of the elements of the success of Huy Fong Sriracha seem counterintuitive: they do have a Facebook page and a Twitter feed (with a modest 2,420 followers), but no advertising budget, no marketing department, no sales person, and yet did nearly $60 Million in business in 2014. And Tran never bothered to trademark the term “sriracha.” Strangest of all—at first glance—is the fact that the company had a huge uptick in sales related to a lawsuit filed against them. Dig a little deeper, though, to find a brand story worth hearing. Timing is an important part of it; no question that being first to market in the sriracha space was a great advantage for Tran when he started his Los Angeles-area company in the 1980’s. It also coincided with the onset of a steady increase in Americans’ appreciation for a kick of heat in their food, and it allows spice novices to experiment at their own rate. As Klara points out, though, authenticity is the key ingredient in the Huy Fong Sriracha brand success story. Seriously, that rooster rules.

*How Huy Fong Put Heat in a Bottle and Seared Sriracha into Our Lives | Robert Klara | Adweek*
Feature Articles

TAUBER TEAM PROJECT COVERAGE

The Tauber Institute for Global Operations at the University of Michigan is a joint venture between the university's Stephen M. Ross School of Business and the College of Engineering. Each summer, teams of Tauber students work on-site for fourteen weeks on projects designed by sponsor organizations.

Moving Closer to the Completely Connected Factory

Stalwart Tauber Team sponsor Stanley Black & Decker presented its 2017 challenge: introduce Smart Factory Technology to the Stanley Engineered Fastening warehouse, to achieve $400,000 in savings. The Tauber Team responded by improving processes to more than double the savings target.

The Challenge to Introduce Smart Factory Technology to Warehouse Operations

Stanley Black & Decker, Inc., a Fortune 500 American company, manufactures industrial tools and household hardware, and provide security products and locks. In alignment with Industry 4.0 principles, Stanley has made the Smart Factory a key part of their strategy. Stanley Engineered Fastening (SEF), their North American Automotive Plastics plant located in Chesterfield, Michigan, launched a Smart Factory initiative in early 2016 centered on the manufacturing plant, which manufactures injection molded fasteners and has 95 molding machines operating 24x7, as well as 16 assembly workstations. The successful implementation has earned the facility selection as one of two Showcase plants among the more than 100 Stanley Black & Decker sites worldwide.

SEF engaged a Tauber Team to help expand the Smart Factory initiative to its warehouse operations, to fulfill the vision of a completely connected factory. An intuitive warehouse operation would yield data and information that would enable workers to act with minimal intervention by supervision and management. The team's goal: a 20% increase in productivity, for approximately $400,000 in savings. The scope of the project was four-fold:

- Value stream map warehouse shipping processes
- Benchmark best-in-class warehousing operations that use Smart Factory principles
- Identify opportunities to increase operational efficiencies by optimizing processes and incorporating Smart Factory tools
- Develop a Smart Warehouse implementation plan and begin to realize savings by deploying priority projects

The Outcome: Improved Processes and $910K+ Savings in One Year

The Tauber Team's recommendations are estimated to save the SEF distribution center more than $910K in one year—more than double the original savings target. Here are some of the ways they did it:

- Reduced cycle time by 45% by automating scanning verification process, after identifying product verification process as bottleneck
• Improved information flow: provided supervisors with real-time data to promote intuitive decision-making, and developed three dashboards to help supers track order status throughout the distribution center
• Improved the picking process through use of wearable scanners and voice technology
• Evaluated solutions for an automated line for weigh-packed product
• Recommended Kanban and an organization redesign to help manage inventory levels, reduce out-of-stocks, and improve communication with manufacturing plant

Navigating the Process

The People Factor

While the scope of work described in this project could apply in many environments, it is the people involved that makes each situation, each outcome, unique. The Tauber Team project at SEF benefited from exceptional individuals and interpersonal dynamics across the board. Students Noe Anzaldua (Master of Supply Chain Management), Mindy Jaffe (Master of Business Administration), and Nicha Viraporn (MSE Industrial and Operations Engineering) turned the challenge of their differences into an opportunity.

Mindy Jaffe noted, "Much of our success is due to having a high-functioning team. We each came in with very different backgrounds, but our unique skill sets complemented each other well, and helped us achieve all that we did."

The team’s work also benefited from the nature of the involvement of Stanley Black & Decker. Noe Anzaldua believes “the support and engagement of Stanley’s management team was key to [us] getting up to speed with the particulars of their business.” Nicha Viraporn commented on the high level of engagement and support of Stanley executives; the team did a short presentation for Stanley Black & Decker President and CEO James Loree, SEF President John Wyatt and several VPs. She also noted the willingness of employees at the SEF plastics plants, which already had some Smart Factory technology, to share advice about implementing it.

Faculty advisor Peter Lenk asserted, "The level of support at Stanley Engineered Fastening has been incredible, and it provides a benchmark for Tauber sponsors.” This support allowed the team to quickly understand the situation, and draft appropriate, effective recommendations.

The Tauber Team was also grateful for the mentorship of David Sachs, a Tauber alumnus at Stanley Black & Decker, who helped them navigate the environment and culture of SEF, and shared tips for a successful Tauber project.

Unusual Aspects, Common Challenges

Faculty advisor Dennis Blumenfeld pointed out that, because of working in a plant environment rather than in an office, “the team were able to dive into addressing improvements to the company's processes practically from Day 1, and already have had an impact on the operations.” The team learned quickly that the SEF business is very customer-focused, with significant customization for each order. This added complexity to their project, but it offered a great opportunity for implementing smart technologies.

A challenge faced by the Tauber Team on this project is common to many endeavors involving changes in technology: an overburdened IT department. New technologies require hours of testing, in several rounds, and the team needed to adjust its expectations and recommendations to accommodate the schedule for moving the new technology through testing and implementation. The team was careful to leave clear, actionable recommendations when they concluded the project.
**Team Benefits**

In addition to the obvious advantage of doing significant work at a top-tier company while still a student, team members named these elements: being pushed out of my comfort zone; becoming more comfortable with ambiguity; learning more about what I’m looking for in future roles; being able to see what is in the industry; combining previous work experience with newly acquired knowledge from the classroom, and then putting it into practice.

**ABOUT TAUBER TEAM PROJECTS**

Each two- to three-person Tauber Team consists of graduate students in Engineering, MBA, and/or MSCM programs. Along with receiving high-level corporate support from the sponsoring company, each team is advised by a College of Engineering and a Ross School of Business faculty member and is overseen by a Tauber Institute Co-Director. The projects begin on-site in May and continue for 14 weeks. Students present the results of their projects and compete for over $40,000 in scholarships at the U-M Tauber Institute’s annual Spotlight! event, held each September in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Spotlight! provides outstanding opportunities for students and corporate partners to establish relationships while exploring innovations in operations and manufacturing.

The 2017 Tauber Team Projects resulted in $575 million in savings according to sponsoring company calculations, an average of $18.5 million per project over three years.

To learn more about the Tauber Institute for Global Operations, visit [tauber.umich.edu/](http://tauber.umich.edu/) or call us at (734) 647-1333.
Predictive Analytics and the Case of the Cracked Cavity

Whirlpool Corporation presented a mystery and a method to their 2017 Tauber Team: Solve the puzzle of the cracked oven cavities, using predictive analytics. The team broke the case, and it identified multi-million-dollar savings opportunities. They went on to take second place among 32 teams entered in the annual Tauber Institute Spotlight! Team Project Showcase and Scholarship Competition.

Tauber Team Tasked with Strategic Assessment to Solve a Manufacturing Mystery

Operations management may go back 7,000 years, but the fundamental drive to improve efficiency and effectiveness is timeless, and the urgency around this challenge seems to grow daily. Increased systems complexity deepens the challenge. The current Industry 4.0 trend yields a smart factory comprising cyber-physical systems, the Internet of things, and cloud computing. For a recent quest to reveal how best to employ predictive analytics, Michigan-based manufacturing giant Whirlpool returned to a resource that has served it well before: a student team from the Tauber Institute for Global Operations.

Whirlpool Corporation generated nearly $21 billion in sales in 2016; the company markets several brands of major home appliances worldwide. Their Advanced Manufacturing (AM) team is the innovation incubator for Whirlpool’s initiative to achieve enterprise-wide Industry 4.0 standards. The Tauber Team—Ignacio Estrada Garcia (Master of Mechanical Engineering and Management) and Ryan Colameo (Master of Business Administration)—was tasked with completing a strategic assessment of the predictive analytics opportunities for some of the more complex machines at the SARES Line in Cleveland, Tennessee, which manufactures oven cavities for the Minerva oven line; during the forming process, there had been frequent, but seemingly random, instances of oven cavities developing rib cracks. Work included these elements:

- Identify which complex machine (or system of machines) to assess, with a look at global impact and company benefit
- Complete a strategic assessment of what data to collect, the benefit from the data analytics, and the software needed to do the analytics
- Run trial tests to document learning through a business case, and identify next steps

A Resolution, and a Way Forward

The trial tests pointed the team in the right direction, yielding the insight that materials properties were playing a significant role, and that the press nerving center was also relevant to the problem. The team identified new data-streams Whirlpool should consider, including the next version of the predictive model, and developed a template framework called (aptly) “The Tauber Framework” to guide the approach to future predictive analytics implementations. The tool will help project leads outline critical tasks for subsequent projects, regardless of the specific process under examination. Ryan Colameo noted that while this type of projects has relatively high upfront costs, the marginal cost of additional projects is lower. In this project, “a savings opportunity of $150K annually was identified, with approximately 50% of this being able to be realized within the next year. Expanding this application across the enterprise represents an annual opportunity of ~$12M globally over the next three to five years. Near-term ROIs are in the 18-37% range, while long term average returns tend to be much larger.”

Navigating the Process

Faculty advisor Ariel Shwayder believes the dedicated support team of University of Michigan faculty advisors, research librarians, and communications specialists each Tauber students come with “allows [them] to dig into the topic(s) more deeply and have more impact. It also creates a structure around the team project.” In this case, both Estrada Garcia and Colameo made special acknowledgement of the academic
resources available through the Michigan Ross Kresge Library, and librarian Halley Todd’s assistance in gathering academic papers and journal articles relating to predictive analytics in manufacturing, which helped them better understand the steps necessary to implement machine learning. And for the first time this year, the support team expanded to include a Tauber alumnus as mentor. Estrada Garcia shared that Jim Beaver (MSCM ’12), Commodity Sourcing Manager at Parker Hannifin, counseled the team on networking and project management, and “his insights allowed us to be more efficient throughout the project.”

The team’s work was also enriched by visiting the Whirlpool manufacturing plant in Tennessee, where Estrada Garcia and Colameo learned more about the specific equipment they would focus on, and spoke with a range of stakeholders, including process engineers, financial analysts, and maintenance workers. Colameo asserts that “getting support from operators on the manufacturing floor was critical to our success. They were knowledgeable about the machinery, and genuinely wanted to make things better. Their insights and observations were invaluable in generating our hypotheses and directing us to trouble areas that needed improvement.”

Team Benefits

The opportunity to apply classroom learning in a real-world setting had multiple benefits for this team. Estrada Garcia cited better understanding of the complex nature of manufacturing, which underscored how conflicting priorities can impede progress. He also noted, “Getting things right the first time around matters, and there are no trivial tasks. Everything needs to be done with an end goal in mind and ensuring that everything will work together.”

Colameo, meanwhile, generated a handy list:

- *Supervision is key.* Whether managing a team or verifying that data is entered correctly . . . make sure the right things are actually happening.
- *Never be afraid to admit something you do not know.* Chances are, especially in a large corporation like Whirlpool, there is an expert just waiting to give you his or her viewpoint.
- Machine learning is cool, however, deriving insights from data does not require a neural network or a decision tree. *Simply visualizing data can tell you some pretty incredible things about a process, or where issues arise.*

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ARCHITECTURE

At Home in Rustic Canyon

The lush, tree-filled setting in Rustic Canyon for this 3,200 square-foot home was beautiful, but it required a particularly thoughtful approach to take full advantage of the abundant natural light flooding the front of the lot. The two-story, inverted-L-shaped structure that architect Greg Crawford designed sits at the back of the lot, embracing a south-exposed courtyard featuring a fire pit, open dining area, and swimming pool. A path along the two-car garage at the top of the L leads to the main entrance, into the living-dining-kitchen space. Light fills the large open area through floor-to-ceiling windows, which span the entire south-facing wall along the inside of the L’s long side.

On the north-facing wall, an exposed staircase leads to the second floor. Here, two bedrooms with en suite bathrooms are bookended by two rooms for office or studio use, and a master suite comprises the lower side of the L, above the open dining area. Scaled-down versions of the dramatic steel-framed windows on the first floor let in more light from the south, and a deck on the west end extends over the garage, providing more access to the outdoors. The scale of the house allows it to integrate into, rather than overwhelm, its setting, and clay plaster walls further connect the house with its verdant surroundings.

Interior designers David John Dick and Krista Schrock chose natural materials including wood, cotton, linen, and wool in neutral and earth tones to furnish the space and create a serene, welcoming home.

For the exterior, Crawford chose bleached reclaimed cedar in a warm brown, complemented by glass, bonderized steel, and lime plaster. The shade of blue of the swimming pool water changes with the light, adding another level of visual interest. The site design allowed for three massive oak trees to remain, and Crawford continued the aesthetic of the surrounding canyon by adding plants compatible with the oak trees. The home is both modern and harmonious with its surroundings, with seamless transitions between the interior and the outdoors.
REPORTS FOR THE JET PROPULSION LAB (JPL) OF NASA

In early 2016, my client CMg Design hired me to copyedit two reports, one for the Jet Propulsion Laboratory at NASA and one JPL’s Microdevices Laboratory (MDL), and to write copy for the first several pages of each report.

2015-2016 Technology Highlights | Jet Propulsion Laboratory

Excerpt 1

The work, the goals, the achievements at JPL are based in exactitude, objectivity, and methodological rigor. They are powered in many ways, though, by the dreams and aspirations of the kind of individuals who could imagine rockets back when the rest of the world was being dazzled by the new idea of airplanes. Their dreams are reflected in the technologies described in these pages.

Excerpt 2

Extraordinary achievements require considerable forward-thinking investment in research and technology development. For example, after decades of support by the National Science Foundation and Caltech, the Laser Interferometor Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) yielded one of the greatest discoveries of the 21st century—the detection of gravitational waves. We dedicate this publication to the vision and leadership that makes these remarkable achievements possible.

Leadership, Vision & Innovation | 2015-2016 | Annual Report

Excerpt 1

ABOUT THE COVER: How is Earth changing? This question, along with six others, comprise the seven Quests that help define the mission of NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Semiconductor laser instruments designed and developed at MDL have proven essential in the remote sensing of carbon dioxide and methane emissions in the polar regions. Research using these lasers has shown that a significant amount of methane is being released during the cold winter months, a revelation that is upending current carbon cycle thinking. Because methane is a major driver of atmospheric warming and global climate change, this data is proving to be extremely important in improving climate model predictions and planning for the future of this planet.

COVER PHOTO: Scientists believe a vast reservoir of methane may be locked in this Antarctic ice sheet. MDL’s experience in technology development for methane detection should prove instrumental in helping scientists assess the effects of this potent greenhouse gas as it is released into the Earth’s atmosphere.
Interpreting Academic Research for the General Audience

The Center for Positive Organizations is an academic research center at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business. Activities include hosting research presentations and conferences, developing programming for students, and facilitating collaborations among a community of researchers worldwide.

POS in Action: Practical Implications of Research on Compassion at Work

Research suggests that compassion matters at work and has positive effects on both those who demonstrate it in response to suffering, and on those who experience compassion from others. In the recent article “Compassion at Work” for Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, Jane Dutton and her co-authors define compassion and suffering, review what researchers currently know about compassion at work, and discuss implications for practice and for future research. Dutton et al. note that, “The timeliness of a focus on compassion at work arises from new scientific evidence and recent calls for more enriched relational perspectives in organizational psychology.” The authors note that suffering at work can arise from events in one’s personal life, from the work itself, from negative interpersonal experiences at work, or from organizational actions, and cite the hundreds of billions of dollars businesses lose annually because of grief, stress, and burnout suffered by the individuals who comprise them. The authors describe research on the role of compassion in responding to this suffering.

How Research on Compassion Can Benefit You and Your Organization

Individuals can cultivate skills to become more compassionate, and to facilitate a compassionate response. The first step is to acknowledge and accept the pervasive suffering in the workplace. Cultivating mindfulness and practicing meditation also promote a compassionate response in general, because they are mechanisms for improving noticing the pain of others. One can use job crafting to incorporate resources (e.g., seeking expert advice) for feeling, making sense of, and responding to suffering. Organizational leaders play a critical role in promoting workplace compassion. They can recognize that individuals are whole people who bring and experience emotions in the workplace, and they can encourage more permeable work and life boundaries. It is also critical for leaders to facilitate high-quality relationships among employees and to implement practices that support compassion.


Audio of a 35-minute interview with author Jane Dutton.
POS In Action: Thriving at Work

As spring approaches, it's a perfect time to think about thriving! Gretchen Spreitzer has been studying what enables people to thrive at work for about 10 years, and her work has yielded an important insight: **In order to feel they are thriving, people need to have a sense of learning and growing, or improving at what they are doing, and they need to feel energized and vital about what they are doing.** It is at the juxtaposition of these two things coming together that promotes a sense of thriving.

How can you thrive at work? Cultivate these four sets of resources:

1. **Meaning** - work that has purpose for you
2. **High Quality Connections** - deeper relationships that can be created in doing the work
3. **Positive Affect** - more laughter and fun in the doing of work!
4. **Knowledge** - learning new things, taking more risks

It is important both to enable these resources as an individual, and to work in an environment that encourages them.


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POS In Action: The Power of Task Enabling

Task enabling—helping to facilitate the successful performance of others—is a classic POS approach, as described in Jane Dutton's book *Energize Your Workplace* (Jossey-Bass, 2003). In addition to improving others' performance, it is a great way to build high-quality connections, and it can happen between people at all levels of an organization.

Practice any or all of these task-enabling strategies to help others do their jobs more effectively:

1. **Teach** - provide information
2. **Design** - make their job more interesting
3. **Advocate** - ease their navigation of the organization
4. **Accommodate** - adjust performance of your job in relation to theirs
5. **Nurture** - focus on their developmental needs

For these actions to be effective, remember to be open both to the feelings and thoughts of the other person, and to being changed yourself by their actions.
Profiles and Interviews

Sherry A. House - A Passion for Finance and Engineering

We caught up with Sherry House (MBA, M. Eng, 1998) in late August 2017, as she was about to take on an exciting new finance role at Waymo, formerly known as Google Self-Driving Car Project. Sherry started as an engineer at GM Electric and then leveraged her Tauber experience to build a career in finance in the automotive and technology industries.

The Tauber Launchpad

Sherry cited her Tauber team project as among the most valuable aspects of her experience at Michigan. Her first real experience with global work, it paved the way for the many global transactions she has participated in since then. "We were working on a global, complex issue at one of the world’s largest multinational companies. We analyzed operations in several countries, including South Korea, Germany, Italy, and the US, and made cross-functional recommendations. It allowed me to safely try on the role of finance leader, and even HR leader, as we crafted the organizational design changes to accompany our team’s recommendations. Being able to take small steps in the Tauber program gave me the confidence to take larger steps in my career."

Career Path

Sherry feels fortunate that some of the elements she had in mind for her career when she graduated from Tauber in 1998 did, indeed, come to fruition. Fear and hope were mixed with her ambitions—how would she be able to stay on the cutting edge outside of academia, in the conservative, risk-averse world of finance? As an investment in her future, Sherry worked in venture capital and private equity for a few years, and then for several years in pure finance, in more traditional environments. While finance itself was not her passion, she wanted to apply finance in the work she did, and was very thoughtful about the positions she took, to ensure that they were building the necessary foundation. Sherry notes, “It’s when finance and engineering come together that I am best aligned with my personal passion, and best able to contribute to the organization. Tauber’s cross-functional nature helped enable this.”

Next move - Waymo

After several years in the Technology, Media, and Telecommunications investment banking practice at Deloitte, and then a stint as vice president of corporate development at Visteon, Sherry has landed at Waymo, as director of corporate finance and financial planning and acquisitions, at their Mountain View, California, headquarters. Waymo’s several hundred employees enjoy perks that include an app to use one of the cars on public streets, within a set radius of Waymo’s headquarters. The self-driving car project began in 2009 within Google’s research and development arm, or as they refer to it, their moonshot factory. In late 2016, the X project graduated as Waymo, an entity of Alphabet, the holding company created in 2015 by Google’s founders, Sergey Brin and U-M School of Engineering alumnus Larry Page.

Possibly the best of both worlds, Waymo is a start-up but is housed within a resource-rich large organization. Sherry will need to build out processes, systems, etc., in a highly-dynamic environment; operations need to be flexible and nimble, and adaptable to the new transportation paradigm still being discovered. She relishes the challenge of building it out while still defining the business model and figuring out how to make money. Her experience working in venture capital, where she supported and advised start-up companies and helped with
business plans, will inform her work at Waymo. “There is an opportunity to potentially be defining the future of transportation; I’ve had a lifelong passion in the automobile technology field, and I have worked at the intersection of automotive and technology for many years.”

**Advice for Current Students**

Sherry's lessons for current Tauber students lie mostly in how she approached her career, and in understanding the utility of graduating from the Tauber program. Sherry went from an engineering position at a large automotive corporation to a finance position at a 35-person venture capital firm right after graduating from Tauber. Sherry advises, “Know that you can go from an engineering position to finance because of the quality of the education and experience and network of Tauber.” Sherry further notes that she had opportunities to take higher-profile positions along the way, but this would have short-changed her future in the long-term and the goals she had. Her varied experiences stretched her and enabled growth; that would not have happened if she had not taken calculated risks along the way.

**The Personal Side**

Sherry met her husband, Chris House, when they were undergraduates at Kettering University, and convinced him to go to Tauber, too; he graduated from the evening program in 2003 with a Master of Manufacturing Engineering and an MBA. Chris is now a program manager for the Model 3 at Tesla.

Sherry has a deep, lifelong passion for education, and believes strongly in the importance of learning and refreshing yourself. In addition to having four degrees and regularly seeking continuing education opportunities, she sat on the boards of organizations relevant to education and would like to get involved with an organization dedicated to promoting STEM education.

She loves organic gardening, especially heirloom tomatoes, and collects wooden mechanical puzzle boxes; Sherry has gone to Hakone, Japan, where puzzle boxes were developed in the late 1800s. Craftsmen layer and compress thin pieces of wood, and then cut across the layers to produce wafer-thin (about .2 mm) sheets of mosaics they use to decorate boxes. Puzzle boxes require incredible skill to create, as the craftsmen set a series of movements that will open a box—usually ranging from three or four to several dozen—and go up in size from mame, tiny boxes that can have a surface area under four inches, to boxes that are more than a foot long.

And what’s on Sherry's reading list? She recently enjoyed Charles Duhigg’s *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business*, and just downloaded executive coach and leadership consultant Foster Mobley’s *Leadersh*t: Rethinking the True Path to Great Leading: Becoming the Leader You Were Meant to Be*.
Rebecca Beagan’s Transformative Journey

“Do you happen to know of any research opportunities for undergraduates this summer?” In 2011, the answer led Rebecca Beagan (BBA 2013) on a journey she says, “changed my life forever.” Rebecca applied for and was accepted to the 2011 POS Summer Fellows Program at the Center for Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS); she worked with Professor Lynn Wooten. The experience helped Rebecca develop her project management skills and contributed to her understanding of diversity and social justice, and it informed her work as a then-new resident advisor at the largest all-freshmen dorm at the University of Michigan.

Rebecca also participated in faculty-hosted weekly lunches with other POS Summer Fellows. Rebecca was deeply affected by an exercise assigned by Robert Quinn at one of those lunches:

1. Think of and write down the 10 best experiences of your life.
2. Do the same for the 10 worst experiences of your life.
3. How do these 20 experiences, the best and the worst, uniquely prepare you to make a difference, to have impact, to lead?

At the time, Rebecca was dealing with the aftermath of a period of her life punctuated by grief and loss. And now Professor Quinn was putting a whole new lens on the consideration of her experiences that allowed her to see an opportunity to relate to others. “This broadened to realizing that all experiences—happy, frustrating, those filled with grief—if embraced, explored, and reflected upon, can create powerful ways to connect with others.”

Now a senior, the ideas and concepts Rebecca began embracing as a POS Summer Fellow are part of her DNA. Her connection with the Center for POS has continued to be transformative, in both directions—in her latest role, she has energetically expanded our social media presence; she hopes to see the Facebook page reach 1,000 likes by May, when she graduates. Rebecca counts these concepts among the most powerful POS ideas she will take with her:

- **High-Quality Connections (HQC):** Jane Dutton’s work on the importance of building HQC through being present for people, task enabling, engaging in play, and building trust is applied daily by Rebecca. Task enabling is critical to her job as resident staff coordinator, where she serves as liaison and a staff resource for 42 resident assistants; her role as advisor and manager of the staff council; and her responsibilities as resident assistant to 52 residents, designing educational programming and providing a good transition to college.

- **Fundamental State of Leadership:** Robert Quinn’s concept is pivotal to Rebecca’s vision of leadership, and she can recite by heart the four transformative questions: Am I results centered? Am I internally directed? Am I other focused? Am I externally open?

- **Reflected Best Self Exercise:** Rebecca cites the importance of recognizing your strengths and understanding how your strengths are perceived by others, and of leveraging and focusing on your strengths. She notes that this concept works not just for an individual, but also for a team, organization, or business.

After graduation, Rebecca Beagan will join Roland Berger Strategy Consultants.
Engaging Students in POS

Betsy Erwin brings a great depth and breadth of experience in Career Development to her new role building CPOS Labs, a program for student engagement at the Center for Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS), as well as a deep appreciation for what POS can bring to the students, and through them, to the world. Some of the program’s ambitious goals are already being realized as the first cadre of students work on projects to expand our social media presence, assist faculty members in translating research concepts into marketable tools and white papers, and investigate the viability of new degree programs. At the heart of Betsy’s efforts is a commitment “to identify actionable ways to give students exposure to POS principles, allow them to be an asset to the Center, and take away tangible skills that will not only help them secure the career they want, but make them better at the work they do once they get there.” Betsy designed the CPOS Labs program to allow students to collaborate with one another, and to develop leadership and teamwork skills. For example, students take turns leading biweekly huddles, and are encouraged to build and lead teams to complete various projects, which are designed to help them develop transferrable skills. Among the most critical features of the program: access to the POS network of scholars and practitioners. Betsy is also working on developing relationships with corporations, with a goal to host events like conferences or panel discussions for students.

Betsy’s previous experience includes her role as Director of the Career Development Office at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, and more than 10 years in the Office of Career Development at the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. She is passionate about doing good in the world and sees her work at the Center for POS as a great vehicle for her energy.

Betsy Erwin can be reached at berwin@umich.edu, for more information about CPOS Labs.
A Passion for Hope – Visiting Scholar Oona Branzei

Oana Branzei is an associate professor at the Richard Ivey School of Business at the University of Western Ontario. She is Visiting Scholar at the Center for POS for the 2012-13 academic year.

The Center's new visiting scholar, Oana Branzei, is passionate about the overarching theme of the positive function of business in society, and she is drawn to learning about what people in extreme situations think that business can do for them. “They see business as almost a salvation. Often, they learn to imagine the future through the business itself,” she notes. “It’s really hard for someone who has been marginalized or traumatized to imagine a better life. Hope is an essential part of lifting them up.” Oana focuses on the dynamics of hope: dreams of better lives, and actions needed to achieve them. Her fieldwork in areas such as Kenya, Tanzania, Sudan, Rwanda, Uganda, Peru, and Bangladesh documents the incidence and resilience of enterprise under extreme scarcity, adversity, and conflict. Oana also researches the emergence and evolution of pro-poor business models in North America, Asia, and Latin America.

Oana's work in the last year with post-genocide widows and orphans in Rwanda has led to deep introspection about all aspects of “our role as researchers and our role as human beings in the academy.” She feels a deep sense of responsibility to the subjects of her research, and she strives to reach “as honestly and deeply within myself as I can so I can make a difference for the participants themselves, if not materially at least humanly.”

In crafting her goals for her time at the Center for POS, Oana notes that, "Looking back over the last seven years [of my research]... each stream generates something new and different, but they all revolve around a deeper question of whether, when, and how positive social change happens.” Oana believes the data she has collected over the years “has answers about a new theory of agency, one that helps us understand new forms of organizing, far from equilibrium.” She feels the community of the Center for POS is uniquely fitting as the incubator for the ideas she is developing now and wrote that she hopes "to draw inspiration and energy from the wonderful work done at the Center.”

Oana Branzei's website