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Is the TAPE cycle model able to address managerial confusion at work?

Frank Rouault
Practical Learning
Paris, France

Phillip Pardo
Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Beppu, Japan
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8834-8789

Kevin R. O'Reilly
Medical University of South Carolina
Lausanne, Switzerland
https://orcid.org/0000-0002.9982-4944

Malcolm Cooper
Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University
Beppu, Japan
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9299-493

Abstract : Our empirical observation of management confusion in business has led the authors to propose an alternative management style to help address this problem, the *TAPE Cycle*. In this construct, we **T**ag management confusion, **A**ct initially upon it, reach a level of **P**erformance using it, and **E**xpand on that practice to fully address confront a deal with confusing situations. In this article, we provide preliminary evidence of the potential utility of the TAPE Cycle as assessed through two quantitative evaluations. These were conducted with 267 respondents from Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in Japan and 118 respondents from ESSEC in France through the authors' networks on their Linked-in social network pages. We hope this assessment will provide business with a useful tool to address and minimize the effect of management confusion. We revisit the notion of confusion and position our exploration of the TAPE cycle in the context of other dominant problem management cycles found in the corporate world. We discuss the limitations of our research and conclude that the TAPE model is valid and a useful way to address and deal with confusion in the workplace.

Keywords: Management confusion; TAPE Cycle Model; Assessment of utility, Performance

Introduction

Being in a state of confusion is, perhaps unfortunately, an ordinary part of the human experience (Keiser, 2023). On the positive side it can mean that we are engaged with a problem, and that it is a first step in a learning experience if we want it (Rouault, Pardo, Cooper, and Claster, 2021). On the negative side it can mean potential disaster for a firm if it is not addressed effectively. Our focus on managing confusion has led us to construct an empirical management cycle we call TAPE (Tag the problem, Act on it, Perform, and Expand on that

performance to better manage the firm), an acronym that summarizes our early view of the key steps to best manage confusion. Although it has been met with an early positive reaction from executives, academics and consultants, we believe it requires serious examination in light of existing research to assess its relevance, validity and reliability (Rouault, Pardo, Cooper, and Claster, 2021).

In this paper, we revisit our definition of confusion, update our review of its applicability in the business context, and articulate the major existing "business cycle models" in the corporate world. As part of this exposition, we present the TAPE model and discuss it in the context of the existing models. We then articulate our assumptions with regards to each TAPE step and the questions we feel need additional exploration, and present our research method, questionnaire approach, research findings and analysis.

Literature Review

We observe that confusion in general can be the product of a person's approach to a problem situation where they confuse things and/or procedures, or the product of a "chaotic" environment that places us in a state of being confused or is the result of an intended action by a third party. This is why confusion fits particularly well with the constructs of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT; Bandura, 2001). Bandura's (1986) SCT is a widely accepted theory that provides a critical perspective in depth for examining the reasons why individuals adopt certain behaviors. SCT explains psychological functioning in terms of triadic reciprocal causation in which behavior, personal, and environmental factors operate as interacting determinants to individuals' behavior (Wood and Bandura, 1989; Lin, 2010). Confusion can be defined as a feeling derived from a situation that reflects a lack of understanding of what is occurring (idea and/or message) and/or misunderstanding the course of action to take in this situation (steps and/or communication) (Rouault et al, 2021). For example, Phillips, Palmer and Varnet (1990) suggest that this can occur "when there is a noncongruence of the meanings assigned to a message by the sender and receiver."

Further exploration of the word "confusion" has revealed that, when discussing the marketing of products, confusion arises when the perceived and true valuations disagree (Hefti, Liu, and Schmutzler, 2022*)*. Hefti, Liu, and Schmutzler (2022*)* further mention that firms can deliberately influence the degree of confusion through their own activities. In the context of product design, Heller and Huber (2020) argue that an "aha moment" is a mediator of positive emotions and confusion is a mediator for negative emotions. Eikenberg (2023) observes that in chaotic times, many employees feel like they are constantly receiving a stream of bad or confusing news that is affecting their work in unpredictable ways that often leads to confusion. With regard to emotions, Wang, Zhu, Chen, Fang (2019) argue that East Asians experience confusion between some of the basic facial expressions of other people from outside East Asia (and vice versa), i.e., disgust vs. anger and fear vs. surprise.

Confusion also occurs in models and constructs; Van Den Assem and Passmore (2022) citing Cavanagh and Spence (2013) observe that mindfulness is "a confused construct" that lacks "definitional clarity and consistency across research studies". Graves (2021) highlights the notion of "conceptual confusion" when addressing team coaching. Finally, in *"How to become a terrible team leader in 12 steps,"* Taylor (2023) states that confusion can however keep your team on their toes!

Cycle Models of problem solving in business

These discussions have led us to draft a management construct that we believe can help address the confusion in management that often occurs when business is faced with situations requiring action to solve the problem: the TAPE MODEL. First though, we review management cycle models in general and reflect on their fit with our model. Management cycles are the processes by which the leaders of an organization help workers ensure that it achieves its objectives (Course Learn.canvas.net, 2021).

Beyond Social Cognitive Theory, the exploration of the TAPE Model is grounded in the stream of Mode 2 pluralist and transdisciplinary management research which manifests *"soft"* properties and is concerned not only with knowing "*what*" but considers questions associated with knowing "*how*" as well. It relies upon a dual approach to knowledge production that is both theory-sensitive and practice-led. It is concerned with building a body of knowledge which documents, codifies and articulates a problem and a solution set concerned with understanding and improving the practice of management (Tranfield and Starkey, 1998, p3). In the present study ten dominant management cycle models are reviewed and summarized.

The **PDCA Model** (Plan – Do – Check- Act) is probably the most prominent, developed originally by Shewhart and Deming (Staton-Reinstein, 2005) to solve quality-related issues and foster continuous improvement in management: Plan (gather data; analyze problem; plan solution), Do (implement solution), Check (measure the results and change), and Act (modify towards improvements) are the key relationships. The **Carnegie Problem Solving Methodology** runs parallel to the PDCA model but adds an additional initial step "Define the Problem" before beginning to plan.

The 5S Method or "lean philosophy" consists of tools used to implement process improvements within organizations. The 5 steps are: Sort, Straighten, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain (Witt, Sandoe, and Dunlap, 2018). **The DMAIC,** developed originally at Motorola and General Electric in the US, is a similar cycle improvement central tool to conduct 6-Sigma projects that aim to improve the quality and the effectiveness of work processes through following a 5 step process: Define the problem; Measure current performance; Analyze the problem; Improve the situation; Control progress and track results. It is similar to the Japanese ***Kaizen*** model, which also stresses the importance cleanliness in the workplace.

The **Experiential Learning Cycle** developed by Kolb (1984) conceptualizes learning from experience in terms of four key components: Experiencing (Concrete Experience), Examining (Reflective Observation), Explaining (Abstract Conceptualization), and Applying (Active Experimentation) (Kolb, 1984; Kolb, Boyatzis, and Mainemelis, 2000).

The **Design Thinking Model** reflects an innovation path and follows the following key steps: Re(define) the problem; make explicit the needed changes; Ideate; build a Prototype; and Test (Faste, Roth, and Wilde, 1993). The **Double Loop Learning Model** by Argyris helps manage not only the improvement of a situation through action and results (single loop), but also the mental model used to assess and address the situation forms a double feedback (learning) loop with the actions (Argyris, 1991).

The Huber Problem Solving Cycle contains the following sequence: Understand the Problem, Plan Solutions, Evaluate these and Choose from Alternative Solutions, Implementation of the Chosen Solution, and finally Monitor and Review the Solution (Kamis and Kahn, 2009). Similarly, the **Team Cycle** describes the sequence of dynamic steps all teams go through: forming; storming; norming; performing; and adjourning in discussing and implementing actions (Tuckman, 1965). Finally, the **PPDAC Structure** described by Spiegelhalter (2019) is a complete cycle of investigation that includes: specify the **P**roblem; draft a careful Plan; Collect Data; Analyze data; and draw **c**onclusions.

When looking at these cycles through the lens of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), we can see numerous commonalities in their approaches: (1) Understanding the issue; (2) Taking the initiative; (3) Measuring progress; (4) Delivering and enhancing the outcome. We empirically observe that these commonalities reflect the fundamental path of nearly any story: in a plausible and emotionally engaging manner (1) Someone is confronted with an issue; (2) takes steps to generate outcomes, with ups and downs along the way, to then be (3) at a crossroad with regards to the initial issue and faced with an outcome and the possibility of additional issues (feedback) while finally making a decision.

The TAPE Cycle

The tool we present for managing confusion is called the TAPE (Tag-Act-Perform-Expand) Cycle. It presents behaviors that are able to manage and leverage confusion when it occurs (Figure 1). The TAPE Cycle model has resulted from exchanges among the authors and relies on four levels: context, stage, behavioral steps, and expected outcome. The first level is **context** related, resides inside the circle (see Figure 2, starting in the upper right quadrant) and describes a general storyline: once upon a time, someone was confused and in *Chaos* and decided to take a *Path* leading eventually to an *Achievement*, which prompted a new *Venture*, which then may lead to Chaos once again. The second level is the **stage for understanding** and refers to the key words that connect actions to the context: Confusion is associated with Chaos; Action with Path,

Mastery with Achievement, and Imagination with new Venture. The third level describes the **behavioral steps** of the TAPE cycle**,** marked with an arrow, which need to be taken into account: Chaos > Confusion > TAG ; Path > Action > ACT; Achievement > Mastery > Perform; and Venture > Imagination > Expand. The fourth level describes the key **expected outcome**s derived from the behavioral steps that are not described in the TAPE cycle but are considered afterwards along with the following behavioral steps:

- Chaos > Confusion > TAG, thus the incumbent expresses an early solid vision of the issue at stake;
- Path > Action > ACT, demonstrating an early initiative to address the confusion;
- Achievement > Mastery > PERFORM, signifying mastery in one's own "ability" and eagerness for more; and
- Venture > Imagination > EXPAND, whereby the incumbent wonders "what's next?" and heads into a new confusion.

Hence we propose the following hypothesis:

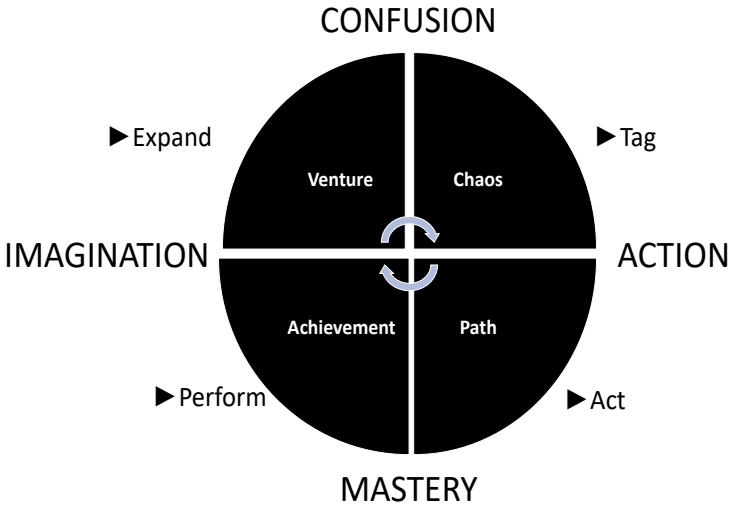


Figure 1 : The Tape Cycle

Hypothesis 1: the TAPE Model represents a logical pattern to address confusion in management.

Behavioral steps and associated expected outcomes

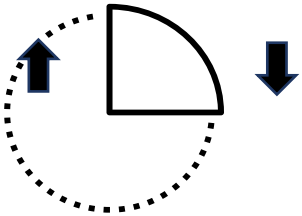
The TAGging step 1: "We've lost the initiative" or "The first step to knowledge is recognition of one's ignorance." Whoever we are, wherever we are, and whatever we do, we always start with a confused view of our surroundings in any action situation. Our first general strategy is to understand how to survive,

enhance our control, and reduce our fear of our surroundings.–Confusion is a feeling close to an emotion, and leveraging the foundation work of Salovey, Mayer, and Caruso (2002) on emotional intelligence, we consider the first stage is grounded in perception and expression. It is important to consider, according to Ackoff (1974), we fail more often because we solve the wrong problem than because we get the wrong solution to the right problem. Therefore, our first skill is to TAG the confusion in the situation. We sense it starts with acknowledging that we are not sure what to think and/or how to act and ends with deciding to take the initiative in the situation. To do so, the behavior requires three fundamental actions:

1. Name the emotion to acknowledge how you "feel" at the beginning of the confusion;
2. Name the confusion to understand its nature (e.g., I do not know what to think
   [idea/message] and/or how to act [steps/communication]); and
3. Name the assumptions that cannot be deduced any further from the situation, these form the basic truth about the situation (Aristotle's first principles).

The general foreseen outcome for the Tagging phase is that the person experiencing it expresses an early solid vision of the issue at stake. Our hypothesis is that:

Hypothesis 2 : the tag step facilitates an understanding of the confusion at stake.



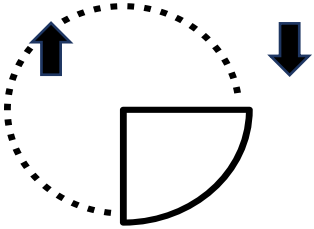
1. _____TAG

Figure 1. The TAGging step

To illustrate this stage, we refer to movie scenes. Steffes and Duverger (2012) observed that the body of academic literature providing theoretical and empirical support for the use of video as an effective teaching tool has increased considerably. This is reinforced by Creel, Paz, and Horn (2019), who state that the use of video clips is acknowledged in University classes as creating a fun learning environment that allows interaction between students and faculty members. Empirically, we think that two movie scenes in particular illustrate this TAG phase. The first is from 2001: A Space Odyssey from Stanley Kubrick (1968) in which a team of astronauts encounters for the first time the monolith on the Moon. Their reaction is to act cautiously, an expression of confusion, until

one astronaut slowly approaches and touches the monolith. The second is in the movie Blackhawk Down (2001) set in the US intervention in Somalia. It is after the scene where the first helicopter is shot down and the commander at the base (Sam Shepard) acknowledges: " We've lost the initiative."

The ACTing step: "Feed the data pool"



1. _____ACT

Figure 2. The ACTing step

After the TAG stage, the intent is to make progress managing the confusion but without seeking perfection. It generally starts with the formulation of an early action plan to address the confusing situation and ends with early practical ideas on what to think and/or how to act in this situation. When considering ACTing, it is essential to remember Darwin's point that it is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent; it is the one that is most adaptable to change. Thus, the second skill is to ACT to start addressing the confusion:

Hypothesis 3: the Act step represents an early attempt to address the confusion.

ACTing is grounded in the **BAR** framework developed by Foss and Klein (2020). It is a process in which an entrepreneur believes he can bring about a particular future (**B**elief), then acts in conditions of uncertainty (**A**ction), and reviews the outcomes towards the anticipated desired future (**R**esults). The ACT behaviors are as follows:

1. Set your path to formulate an action with an intention;
2. Act to accomplish the action steps that will address the intention; and
3. Obtain early results to observe initial progress towards the intention.

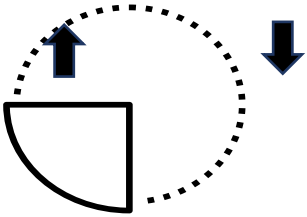
The generally foreseen outcome for the ACTing phase is that the incumbent demonstrates an early initiative to address the confusion. A recent event was for us a strong illustration of this phase. Mr. Anderson Cooper, a senior anchor at CNN interviewed in 2021, *retired Navy Lt. Commander Alex Dietrich, a veteran combat pilot, about her report of spotting a UFO off the coast of San Diego,*

California in 2004. Her words: "I'm not qualified to make this analysis - I write and share my observations to contribute to a data pool to enable professionals and scientists make reasonable and sound conclusions."

The PERFORM steps are thus a "Giant leap for mankind:"

Beginning: Engage in; End: enjoy. The relevant hypothesis for our cycle model is:

Hypothesis 4: The PERFORM step reflects the achievement of relevant results towards solving the confusion.



1. _____PERFORM

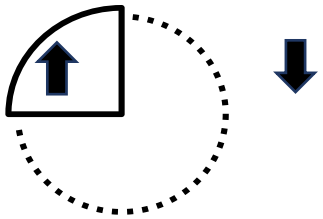
Figure 3. The PERFORM step

In this stage, we become more effective and efficient in our various activities that we consider will be able to give us mastery over the confusion in the situation. It generally starts with engaging in a path towards consistent performance and ends with enjoying good consistent results. This helps us optimize our contributions, reduce our risks and fears, and maximally take control, providing the necessary bandwidth to focus on what's next. When we perform, we are effective and comfortable.

Performing leads us to navigate what Csikszentmihalyi (1990) described as flow: the psychology of optimal experience where our best experiences occur as we strive to address more and more complex problems and navigate between boredom and anxiety. The PERFORM behaviors are as follows:

1. Deliver results that can be defined as strong levels of performance;
2. Sustain the effort to ensure performance consistency over time; and
3. Reach Flow to feel enjoyment, comfort, and a desire for more.

The general outcome of the PERFORM phase is one demonstrates mastery in one's own "art" (Rouault, Pardo, and Drugmand, 2020) and has an eagerness for more. We were quick to agree that ultimate illustration of the Perform Step was when Neil Armstrong first walked on the moon and stated: "this is a small step for man and a giant leap for mankind" (NASA, 1969).



1. EXPAND

Figure 4. The EXPAND steps

The EXPAND stage focuses on imagining and creating further scenarios by expanding and exploring the unknown with its associated set of new confusions. It starts with choosing to develop our new improvements, whether they are continuous or radical, and ends with observing our enhanced performance. This pattern is repeated constantly whether we talk about the U.S. elections, environmental protection, the Italian Renaissance, the COVID-19 responses, children's education, care for the elderly, or our respective jobs….and so on. Thus, the following is that:

Hypothesis 5: the Expand step represents infusing additional insights or practices to enhance the management of confusion.

Towards this, Willkomm (2019) encouraged us to change our thought processes, force ourselves to take risks, encourage others to be open minded, and embrace learning to start adapting. Murray and Johnson (2021) discuss outcome and time as effective constraints for this increase in innovation, however. Einstein highlighted the fact that imagination is more important than knowledge. Robinson (2017) argued *"to be creative, you must do something. Creativity is very practical. I think of it as applied imagination, thus putting your imagination to work".* To do so, we observe the following sequence: formulate the question; incubate possible answers; reach a *Eureka* moment; and act towards producing new "solutions," whatever they may be.

The EXPAND behaviors are as follow:

1. Ideate towards findings new areas of "improvement";
2. Integrate to marry the existing and the new meaningfully; and
3. Outperform to reach new contribution heights.

The general outcome of the EXPAND phase lies in "what's next" and a new confusion. The Apollo 13 movie with Tom Hanks (Howard, 1995) brought us a solid example of the expand Phase where engineers after the accident that poisons the ship's air say: "OK people, listen up. People upstairs handed us this one and we've got to come through. We've got to find a way to make repairs." Thus, confusion is the starting and ending point of the cycle, whatever it may be. But it is the beginning of understanding. We can empirically observe that the

three phases that follow the TAG phase align with a roadmap for innovation leadership based on demonstrating action (ACT), building connections (PERFORM), and investing in the future (EXPAND). This review has led us to engage in theory testing using a positivist approach as described below.

Research Methodology

Though the TAPE Cycle appears to us to be useful, we need a more objective assessment of the model. To accomplish this, we designed a short questionnaire to be administered to students taking business classes in two locations, ESSEC in France and Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in Japan. After a short presentation of this research project on confusion and on the TAPE Cycle as a framework to address it, students were asked to judge whether it might be useful when people are experiencing confusion. The questionnaire we designed covered demographics and personal characteristics: age, gender, occupation, location or region they are from, industry they work in, what role they have in that industry; followed by a series of questions about their own personal experience of confusion (how frequently they experience confusion, how confusion affects or impacts them, how facing or addressing confusion makes them feel); and questions about the TAPE Cycle itself (does the TAG step facilitate understanding of confusion; does the ACT step present an early step to address confusion; does the PERFORM step appear to be helpful to achieve relevant results to deal with confusion; does the EXPAND step provide additional insights into the confusion and its remedy). Finally, the respondents were asked to evaluate whether the TAPE cycle seemed logical and helpful.

The short questionnaire was given in English to 267 students in Beppu and in French to 118 students in Cergy Pontoise. This non-random convenience sample of 400 respondents from over 50 different nationalities, 170 (44%) females and 230 (56%) males, provided us with an initial objective perspective for our preliminary assessment of the TAPE Cycle. Though these respondents were officially undergraduate students, more than one quarter of the respondents were 25 years old or older with experience in business. We tallied the responses to each question and analyzed the effect of age and gender on the responses to questions on the frequency and experience of confusion, testing the relationship by a chi square statistic.

Analysis

Experiencing confusion is not a rare event. Eighteen percent of respondents reported experiencing confusion daily, more than thirty percent experienced it weekly and nearly thirty percent reporting experiencing confusion monthly. Those less than 25 years old reported experiencing confusion more frequently than those 25 years old or older, a statistically significant difference ($p=0.04$) (Table 1).

Table 1. frequency of experiencing confusion by age group

Age	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Yearly	Total
<25	61	96	79	28	18	282
>=25	10	26	36	18	13	103
Total	71	122	115	46	31	385
	18.4%	31.6%	29.8%	11.9%	8.0%	

Nearly all respondents (95%) reported that confusion impacted them negatively or very negatively. No significant difference in the degree of impact of confusion was found by gender or by age. However, female respondents were significantly more likely than male respondents to report that confusion affects their performance (p=0.05). It is possible though that male respondents were less comfortable admitting the effect confusion has on their work, but we were unable to assess that with this short questionnaire. No difference by age in the degree of comfort in addressing confusion once it is experienced was found.

Overall, the respondents found the TAPE Cycle to be a useful tool, with the overwhelming majority (80%) agreeing with the statement "Now that you have reviewed the TAPE Model, does it represent for you a logical pattern to address confusion?" Sixteen percent neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement and only 4% disagreed. Individual elements of the TAPE Model were assessed equally positively. For example, seventy five percent of respondents answered "agree" or "strongly agree" with the question "does the TAG step facilitate understanding of confusion?". Only slightly more than 5% disagreed and the remainder (18%) were neutral. A similar pattern with strong agreement was seen in response to the other questions as well.

Though students are a common source of data for assessing or evaluating tools under development, it is always possible that they are more positively disposed to materials they are presented in classes by their professors. That can clearly be the case here, but the strength of the positive responses suggests that the assessment that the TAPE model is a useful way to address confusion is in fact valid. We believe further exploration needs to be conducted on the cosmology of confusions experienced at work and look forward to further testing on the usefulness of the TAPE model.

Conclusions

Our empirical observation of management confusion has led us to propose an alternative management approach to help address it: the TAPE Cycle. In this construct, we Tag confusion, Act initially upon it, reach an acceptable level of Performance using it, and Expand on that practice to fully address subsequent confusion situations. In this article, we provide preliminary evidence of validity and reliability of the TAPE Cycle as assessed through two quantitative evaluations. These were conducted with 267 respondents from Asia Pacific Ritsumeikan University in Japan and 118 respondents from ESSEC in France and the authors networks on their LinkedIn social network pages. The limitations of our research are that we did not in this first stage of testing assess the model in

the actual business situation, only as a business case analysis situation for students to work on. However, we conclude that the TAPE model is a useful way to address confusion and is in fact valid based on their experience with business cases.

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About the Authors

Frank Rouault DBA is an entrepreneur, consultant and coach to Executives, Managers and their teams in the fields of strategy formulation and execution, learning in action, and success beyond cultures. Founded in 1999 his consultancy, Practical Learning the smart way to learn®, has been advising businesses on how to achieve results in these areas. Prior to creating Practical Learning, Frank worked at Achieveglobal, Herman Miller and Goëmar

International in sales and training positions. Frank is a French Foreign Trade Advisor and holds a BBA from ESSEC, a Master in Entrepreneurship and a DBA from EM Grenoble. He teaches at various business colleges and has published + 50 articles and books on professional development.

Kevin O'Reilly is a Swiss and American researcher in western Switzerland. He is a medical anthropologist and epidemiologist and has more than 35 years' experience in international public health, working in than 50 countries with academic institutions, national governments, NGOs and international organizations. He worked for more than twenty years as a senior scientist at the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, holding various positions in research, monitoring and evaluation and management, with a particular focus on the prevention of sexual transmission of HIV and on sexual and reproductive health. Prior to WHO, he had worked for more than a decade at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, focusing on HIV/AIDS from the earliest days of the epidemic. He is a Clinical Associate Professor in the Division of Global Community Health, the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, South Carolina, USA.

Phillip Pardo is Associate Dean and Professor of Accounting at the Graduate School of Management, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU) in Japan. His research focuses on innovation, resilience, and engagement in accounting. He also explores the management contributions of the many traditions of chivalry and analyzes their virtues by proposing a new MAP (Mastery, Altruism and Passion) model for the application of these virtues to business practice in the modern era. He has taught at various universities around the world, and his course work translates industry and government experience in auditing, taxation, and consulting (Deloitte Tohmatsu, Toyota and the Pentagon) into a practical yet academically sound approach to education. His research has been published in various international journals. A recent book Mastery-Altruism-Passion Model: Return to Knightly Virtues in Business explores the foundations of the MAP model.

Emeritus Professor Dr. Malcolm Cooper is from Wellington, New Zealand. Since 2003 he has lived in Beppu, Japan, working at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. He was the inaugural Vice President for International Relations and Research at APU (2005-2012) and taught a range of tourism and hospitality management and business management subjects. At Nagasaki University he teaches Introduction to Economics and Healthcare Economics. Previously, he taught at and managed Universities in Australia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, and the United Kingdom. He has also worked in the city planning and tourism policy areas for Federal, State and Local Governments in Australia and New Zealand. At other times he has been a private planning consultant and a tourism education consultant to the Governments of Dubai, Sri Lanka, China and Vietnam. He is a recipient of the Australian Centennial Medal, a Fellow of the Planning Institute of Australia, and has published over 180 books and papers, specializing in

tourism development, health & wellness tourism, medical tourism, events management, and environmental impact.

Appendix

Questionnaire

We are all confronted by confusion: a state of not knowing what to think and or how to act often in all aspects of our lives. Please answer the following questions as best you can.

Confusion is a state I experience

- ☐ Once a year
- ☐ Once a quarter
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Once a day

Confusion affects my performance

- ☐ Very negatively
- ☐ Negatively
- ☐ Nor negative nor positively
- ☐ Positively

To address confusion, I generally feel

- ☐ Very uncomfortable and ineffective
- ☐ Somehow uncomfortable and ineffective
- ☐ Somehow comfortable and effective
- ☐ Very comfortable and effective

We have observed that when we want to address confusion, we engage into an empirical systematic process that we describe as the TAPE model which has 4 major steps:

1. **TAG STEP.** First, we attempt to understand the confusion we are confronted with, and we often try to give it a name, to reflect what we know is true in association to the confusion and place it into our context. We call this phase TAGGING the confusion and the associated typical behaviors are:
    a. Acknowledge the issue but not being sure of what to think and/or act on it.
    b. Attempt to or name the issue.
    c. Seek to make some early sense of the issue.
    d. Build knowledge around "what is going on here?"
    e. Review fundamental truths associated to the issue that will not change or cannot be altered.

f. Consider if the pain-gain outcomes make it necessary to act in the situation.

The TAG step facilitates an understanding of the confusion at stake:

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither A/D
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

2. **ACT STEP.** Second, we take the initiative knowing this might not be the perfect solution to address the situation, but it is a step forward that helps us tame the confusion. We call this phase ACTING on confusion and the associated typical behaviors are:

   a. Take the initiative.
   b. Engage into action steps towards your intent.
   c. Do not expect accuracy but seek plausible sense.
   d. Build knowledge around "an early application."
   e. Review early results.

The ACT step represents an early attempt to address confusion.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither A/D
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

3. The **PERFORM STEP.** Third, we act towards effectively addressing the confusion and making it a non-issue for us. We call this phase PERFORMING in relation to the confusion situation and the associated typical behaviors are:

   a. Build a sense of performance from experience.
   b. Sustain dedicated and consistent effort.
   c. Build consistent results over time.
   d. Build knowledge around theory to act towards accuracy.
   e. Find enjoyment in our achievements so far.

The PERFORM step reflects achieving relevant results towards confusion at stake.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither A/D
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

4. **EXPAND.** Fourth, we bring new ideas, innovative insights to help us enhance our comfort or effectiveness in addressing the confusion. We call this phase EXPAND on confusion and the associated typical behaviors are:

   a. Make sense of additional cues.
   b. Ideate towards new areas of improvements.
   c. Marry the existing and the new.
   d. Build knowledge around leveraging, sustaining, disrupting.
   e. Seek another confusion.

If this leads us to a new confusion, we empirically repeat the process.

The EXPAND step represents infusing additional insights or practices to enhance the management of confusion.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither A/D
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

Now that you have reviewed The TAPE Model, does it represent for you a logical pattern to address confusion?

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither A/D
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

Profiles

Age	Number	Percent
Less than 30 years		
30 to 50		
More than 50 years		
Total	100.0 %	

Gender	Number	Percent
Male		
Female		
Total	100.0 %	

Industry	Number	Percent
Manufacturing		
Transportation/Communications/Utilities		

Wholesale/Retail/Trade		
Financial/Insurance/Banking		
Business Services		
Health Services		
Education Services		
Public Services		
Other		
Total	100.0 %	

Job Category	Number	Percent
Salesperson		
Professional		
First-line Supervisor		
Middle Manager		
Customer Service Person		
Production Worker		
Senior Manager		
Executive		
Administrative Employee		
Total	100.0 %	

Origin of Respondents	Number	Percent
North America		
South America		
Europe		
Asia		
Australia		