

THE SECOND BRIEF · CHAPTER EIGHT

The Field Manual

Chapter Eight of The Second Brief

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THE LICENCE

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Chapter Eight of The Second Brief

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Chapter Eight of The Second Brief. The whole book, with every chapter, is at business.hautelumiere.life/library/the-second-brief (DOI https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23989141).

A NOTE BEFORE YOU READ

This work is offered for education and leadership development. It is not legal, financial, accounting, investment, medical or psychological advice; take the advice of a qualified professional who knows your circumstances. Companies and events are described from the public record as the author understands it; characterisations are the author's analysis. Examples are illustrative, and no particular outcome is promised to any reader.

ABSTRACT

The chapters so far have explained the second brief, tested it against its critics, read it as a living system and watched it work in a café, a carpet maker, a Danish port and an outdoor clothing company. This chapter is the sequence. It sets out, week by week across a year, what a leader does to run a regenerative programme in an organisation of between ten and a few thousand people, who does each part, and which decisions have to be made at which point. It is written to be followed, and it is also written to be adapted. A café will move through the first quarter in a month. A manufacturer with several sites will need the whole year for the first cycle and will run several of the steps in parallel at different sites. What should not change is the order. Every step depends on the one before it, and the commonest way these programmes fail is by starting in the middle: launching an initiative before anyone has chosen the stock it serves, or committing money before the plan has been put through the test.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Field Manual

How to use this chapter

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Santa Anna's *Ecstatic Economics* describes the most effective alternative enterprises as "clear about their values and flexible about their strategies."[48] The field manual is built on that sentence. The values, the second brief and the stock it serves, are fixed at the start. Almost everything else is expected to change as the programme learns.

The six roles

A regenerative programme needs six roles. In a small organisation one person may hold two or three. In a large one each may be a small group. What matters is that each is named, because a role nobody holds is a step nobody takes.

The sponsor. The person at the top, or as near the top as possible, who regards the programme as part of what the organisation is for. Chapter 6 suggested that Interface's programme survived because its sponsor was its founder. The sponsor's job is not to run the programme. It is to protect it in a bad quarter, to put its questions on the board's agenda and to make the decisions marked *sponsor* below.

The owner. The person who carries the plan day to day. This is usually a senior manager in operations, not a specialist in a separate department, because the work is operational. The owner keeps the ledger, convenes the map, runs the tests and holds the decision log.

The work team. Three to six people who do the work the programme touches: a supervisor from the shop floor, someone from purchasing, someone who deals with customers, someone who handles waste. They draw the map and run the inventory. They know what leaves the building better than the person who signs for it.

The sceptic. One person whose job is to put every plan through the Leak and Rebound Test of chapter 3 and to ask what each change displaces. The sceptic should be respected and should not be the owner's subordinate. A finance director often makes a good one.

The finance partner. The person who makes sure every line of the programme still shows whether the organisation is paying its way. The second brief is not permission to lose money. The finance partner keeps the second column of the accounts honest.

The neighbour contact. The person who makes the calls: to suppliers, nearby firms, farms, schools, the municipality, other users of the stock. This is often the owner in a small firm and a purchasing or community-relations manager in a large one. It needs someone who is good on the telephone and patient with slow answers.

Before week one: the three decisions

Three decisions are made before any work begins. They take a single meeting of the sponsor and the owner, and they are written down.

Decision 1 · The verb. Is this programme meant to reduce harm, to sustain a level, or to regenerate? Chapter 2 argued that most projects honestly answer *reduce*, and that this is fine. A programme can include all three. What the decision rules out is calling a reduction a regeneration. Write the verb, and if the answer is *regenerate*, continue.

Decision 2 · The stock. Choose one stock the organisation depends on and does not own. Chapter 2 gave examples: the soil on a supplier's farms, the skills of a regional workforce, the trust of a neighbourhood, the health of a river downstream, the condition of the communities around a site. Choose one, not several. Write how its condition will be described so that someone outside could check the description. If nobody knows its condition today, the first task of the programme is to find out, and that is a perfectly good first task.

Decision 3 · The boundary and the horizon. Write down which part of the organisation the first cycle covers (one site, one product line, the whole firm) and over what period it will be judged. Chapter 4 called

this *time to show*. A programme judged at three months that needs two years to show will be killed by its own reporting.

Weeks 1 to 4 · See

The first month is spent looking. Nothing is bought, changed or announced.

Week 1. The owner writes the verb on every significant proposal currently in progress: capital requests, product briefs, supplier reviews. This takes an hour and changes the conversation in every meeting that follows, because people begin to ask which verb a project answers. The owner starts the Three-Column Ledger of chapter 2, with one line per significant activity.

Week 2. The work team draws the Metabolism Map of chapter 4, in a two-hour session with a large sheet of paper. The owner facilitates; the sponsor does not attend, because people draw more honestly without the most senior person in the room. The map's blanks, the outputs whose next destination nobody knows, become the agenda for the next fortnight.

Week 3. Everyone who handles materials spends a week noticing what leaves the building, using Part 1 of the Waste-Is-Food Inventory from chapter 5. The instruction is to write things down, not to fix them. A good inventory includes heat, water, empty rooms, idle vehicles and unused skills as well as materials.

Week 4. The neighbour contact makes the calls from Part 2 of the inventory: three possible users for each significant output. The owner, the sponsor and the sceptic meet for an hour at the end of the month.

End of month 1 · Decision 4 (sponsor). From the map, the ledger and the inventory, choose *one* change and *one* exchange to take forward. One change inside the organisation, one exchange with a neighbour. The temptation, which the café's owner in chapter 5 gave in to, is to choose all of them. The rule is one of each.

Weeks 5 to 8 · Test

The second month is spent testing the two chosen items before any money is spent.

Week 5. The sceptic runs the Leak and Rebound Test of chapter 3 on both items, in writing, with the owner. The six questions are: which loop, where is the boundary, how many passes at what quality, what does it displace, which stock and how will we know, and will it survive a bad year. Any question the plan cannot answer is marked, and the plan goes back to be revised, not rejected.

Week 6. The finance partner writes one page for each item: what it costs in money and time, what it saves, what it might earn, and over what period. Where a figure is an estimate, the page says so. Where it is unknown, the page says *unknown* rather than inventing a number.

Week 7. The neighbour contact returns to the chosen neighbour with a specific proposal: what will be exchanged, how often, in what form, who will handle it on each side. The contact asks the question from

chapter 4's reciprocity principle: what would the relationship return to *them*? The answer is written down in their words.

Week 8. The owner writes each item into a routine, not a project plan. The exchange goes into a delivery schedule or a contract. The change goes into a rota, a standard operating procedure or a purchasing rule. Chapter 3 argued that a practice that has to be argued for every time is dropped under pressure; this week is when that is prevented.

End of month 2 · Decision 5 (sponsor). Approve, revise or stop each item, on the evidence of the test and the finance page. Record the reason in the decision log.

Weeks 9 to 16 · Start

The third and fourth months are the first run.

Weeks 9 and 10. The change and the exchange begin. The owner continues the ledger. Nothing else is added. This is harder than it sounds, because a programme that has begun to work attracts ideas, and every new idea dilutes attention from the two that are running.

Weeks 11 and 12. The owner checks each item against its routine. Is the exchange happening on its scheduled days? Is the change being done by the people whose rota it is in? If either has lapsed, the reason is almost always that it was written into a routine nobody uses. The fix is to move it into one they do.

Weeks 13 and 14. The sceptic returns to the displacement question. For the exchange: is the neighbour using what they receive instead of something they would have bought, or as well as? For the change: has anything else increased as a result? Chapter 5's café watched its fresh-bread sales for a month to see whether the day-old shelf was diverting customers or reaching new ones. Every programme has an equivalent figure to watch.

Weeks 15 and 16. The work team meets for an hour to say what they have noticed. This meeting matters more than its length suggests. The people who do the work see effects that do not show on any dashboard: the supplier whose driver now stays for coffee, the colleague who has started bringing ideas, the waste stream that has quietly grown somewhere else.

End of month 4 · Decision 6 (owner and sponsor). Is each item running as designed? If yes, it continues unchanged. If no, it is revised once and given another month. If it fails again, it is stopped and the reason recorded. Stopping an item is not a failure of the programme. It is the programme learning.

Weeks 17 to 26 · Hold

The second quarter of the year is about keeping what has started and preparing the second cycle.

Weeks 17 to 20. The owner adds one condition measure for the chosen stock to the weekly or monthly dashboard the leadership already reads. Chapter 9 sets out how to choose it. The point of putting it on the existing dashboard, rather than in a separate sustainability report, is that it is then discussed in the same meeting as revenue and costs.

Weeks 21 and 22. The neighbour contact calls the other users of the chosen stock: the other firms that draw on the same river, the other employers who depend on the same trade school, the other farms in the same catchment. The question is simple: what are you doing about it, and would it help to talk? This is the first step from a firm's programme towards the commons governance chapter 12 describes, and it often produces the second exchange without anyone looking for it.

Weeks 23 and 24. The sponsor and the owner go through the Neighbour and Owner Audit of chapter 7. Where is each commitment written? Which would survive a sale, or the sponsor's departure? One commitment is moved one column to the right: from a speech into a policy, from a policy into a board resolution, from a resolution into supplier contracts.

Weeks 25 and 26. The work team redraws the Metabolism Map. The owner compares it with the first: the number of blanks, the number of return arrows, the number of flows marked as working while depleting what they run through.

End of month 6 · Decision 7 (sponsor, reported to the board). The half-year review. The owner presents the two maps, the ledger, the condition of the stock (or *not measured*), the decision log and the financial line. The sponsor decides whether to begin a second cycle with a new change and a new exchange.

Months 7 to 12 · The second cycle

The second half of the year repeats the first, faster and with one difference. The first cycle chose a change and an exchange. The second also asks a structural question, taken from chapter 12: does the revenue model reward products and services that last, or does it earn more when they wear out? If it earns more when they wear out, the second cycle's change should be a small experiment in the other direction: a repair service, a lease, a take-back, a longer warranty. It may not pay at first. Its purpose is to learn whether, in this market, the second brief and the business model can be brought into line.

Month 12 · Decision 8 (board). The annual review. Chapter 10 sets out how to present it, and chapter 9 how to read its numbers honestly. The board decides three things: whether the programme continues; whether any commitment should be written into the organisation's governing documents; and what the stock's condition should be at the end of the following year, stated as a description someone outside could check.

The decision log

Every decision above is recorded in one log, kept by the owner. It has five columns: the date, the decision, who made it, the evidence it was based on, and what would cause it to be revisited. The log is the programme's memory. When the owner changes, the new owner reads the log first. When the board asks why something was stopped, the log answers. And when, two years later, the stock's condition has changed, the log is the only way to know which decisions might have caused it.

A programme without a log is a set of initiatives. A programme with one is a practice that can learn.

The three ways it usually goes wrong

It starts in the middle. The organisation launches an initiative, a take-back scheme, a new material, a pledge, before choosing the stock or running the test. The initiative may be good. It has nothing to be measured against, and in the first bad quarter nobody can say what would be lost by cutting it.

It does too much. The programme takes forward every idea from the inventory at once. Within two months half have lapsed, and the people involved conclude, wrongly, that regeneration does not work here. One change and one exchange per cycle is slow. It is also how Kalundborg was built.

It burns out its people. Santa Anna's book names this risk precisely: "Organizations built on passion and purpose are paradoxically vulnerable to the very depletion they aim to heal."[48] A programme carried by two enthusiasts on top of full-time jobs will last as long as their energy does. The roles above exist so that the work is spread, written into routines and given time in the rota. A regenerative programme that depletes the people running it has failed its own test on its first stock.

For the household

A household can run the same year with fewer roles. One person is the owner; a partner, a friend or an older child is the sceptic. Month one is noticing: what is bought, what is thrown away, what is repaired. Month two is choosing one change (mend before replacing; buy one durable thing instead of three cheap ones) and one exchange (a neighbour who wants the garden waste, a friend who will swap tools). Months three to six are keeping them going. Chapter 11 sets out the household version in full.

A year on the wall

The whole sequence fits on one page, and it is worth printing that page and putting it on a wall where the work team will pass it. A plan kept in a document is read at reviews. A plan on a wall is read on the way to the kettle, and that is where most of the useful questions about it get asked.

The Tool: The Twelve-Month Programme Sheet

One page, kept by the owner and reviewed by the sponsor at each decision point.

The programme- Organisation: __ · sponsor: _ · *owner: - Work team: · sceptic: · finance partner: · neighbour contact: - Decision 1, the verb: - Decision 2, the stock, and how its condition will be described: - Decision 3, the boundary of the first cycle: · time to show: ___*

The year

WEEKS	PHASE	WHAT HAPPENS	LEAD ROLE	DECISION AT THE END	DONE (DATE)
1–4	See	Verb on proposals; ledger; map; inventory; calls	owner, work team, neighbour contact	4 · one change, one exchange (sponsor)	
5–8	Test	Leak and Rebound Test; finance page; proposal to neighbour; write into routines	sceptic, finance partner, owner	5 · approve, revise or stop (sponsor)	
9–16	Start	Run both items; check routines; check displacement; team debrief	owner, sceptic, work team	6 · continue, revise once, or stop (owner, sponsor)	
17–26	Hold	Condition measure on dashboard; call other users; move one commitment; redraw map	owner, neighbour contact, sponsor	7 · half-year review (sponsor, to board)	
27–52	Second cycle	New change and exchange; revenue-model experiment	owner, finance partner	8 · annual review (board)	

The decision log

DATE	DECISION	MADE BY	EVIDENCE	REVISIT IF

How to keep it honest. Add nothing outside the sequence. Write *not measured* wherever that is true. If a phase overruns, extend it rather than skip the next one. At the end of the year, the sheet and the log together are the evidence the board needs, and the evidence the next owner will read first.

References

1. Santa Anna, A. *Ecstatic Economics*, chapter 4, the section on the challenges facing alternative economic practice ("The Purity Problem" and "The Burnout Paradox"). Developmental Canon, Luminous Prosperity Inc. Ava's library, file `020-ecstatic-economics.md`. Both passages proven verbatim with `his-words`, 19 October 2026.

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