



Global
**Business
Anthropology
Summit**



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**Global Business
Anthropology Summit**

Wayne State University

April 24, 2018

Final Report

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Executive Summary

On April 24, 2018, 74 business anthropologists and students from nine countries met at Wayne State University to discuss the current state and future directions of business anthropology. This specialty—which has experienced substantial growth over the past ten years, with two new journals, an industry conference, and a major initiative at the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association in 2017—is marked by both theoretical and practical challenges—and significant opportunities.

Business anthropology has emerged to respond to a growing need, in corporate and government bodies, for a close examination of the behavioral and cognitive influencers in decision making. The applications have grown with every passing year, from advertising to marketing to product development to governance to mergers and acquisitions to banking, and well beyond. Preparation for careers in these fields is not more than 25 years old, but the demand is growing exponentially. A core purpose of the Business Anthropology Summit has been to frame the agenda for this relatively new discipline, thus making it easier to learn and collaborate within our community, and to initiate new corporate and government collaborations and projects that reflect anthropological perspectives and methods.

The Summit was preceded by the submission of issues statements by the participants, the content analysis of which, as described in Section 2, revealed three overriding themes:

- ▶ Practicalities of the work
- ▶ Market trends
- ▶ Training the next generation of academics and practitioners

An opening plenary featured presentations on each of these three themes by Rita Denny, Robert Morais, and Christina Wasson. After a general discussion, six working groups, randomly composed of all the Summit participants, discussed each of the three themes (two groups per theme). The groups were placed in different spaces and led by a facilitator who focused on the issues and conducted the discussion. After a general discussion before lunch, the working groups continued and then reconvened for a closing discussion of next steps.

With such a wide-ranging discussion, it is difficult to do justice to all of the ideas and insights that emerged. But the most prominent proposals raised by the working groups can be summarized as follows:

- ▶ *Improved communication* with both academic colleagues and business coworkers and clients. We are prepared to work with our colleagues in the academy and in business to strengthen communication channels.
- ▶ *Substantial changes are needed with regard to how graduate departments train their students* in the anthropology of and for business, particularly when students are headed for careers outside anthropology departments. We are prepared to work with training programs on productive enhancements.
- ▶ *More interchange between academics and practitioners* is needed. We need to enrich the forums available for interactions among anthropologists affiliated with academic and business organizations.
- ▶ *Reaching out to the general public*, in terms of promoting Business Anthropology. Increasing the public visibility of the contributions anthropologists make to productive, socially responsible business enterprises.

Each of these points is developed in the report that follows.

I. Background

On April 24, 2018, 74 Business Anthropologists and students from nine countries met at Wayne State University to discuss the current state and future directions of Business Anthropology.

The beginnings of what is known today as “business anthropology” may be found in an early study by W. Lloyd Warner and J. O. Low, *The Social System of a Modern Factory* (Warner and Low 1947). In the 1930s, Warner, whose initial fieldwork was among the Murngin of northern Australia, turned the ethnographic gaze toward modern communities and institutions with his five-volume Yankee City series. Ever since, the anthropological study of contemporary institutions and communities has coexisted, albeit uneasily, with anthropology’s dominant focus on the unfamiliar and the exotic. For better or worse, this ability—to familiarize the exotic and, conversely, to exoticize the familiar—is anthropology’s calling card.

In the 1980s, a focus on corporate culture reinvigorated anthropological interest in contemporary business, and in 1983, the first course in “Business Anthropology” was launched at Wayne State University. During the mid-1980s, marketers began incorporating anthropological methods and theory into their work, and that application, along with the use of anthropology in and for design, has gained substantial traction over the past several decades. At the end of the 20th century, the tech boom—which delivered not simply new devices but also new experiences, new social and civic spaces, and new ways of seeing the world—led to a growth in employment of anthropologists in hardware and software industries and an appreciation of the ethnographic methods of immersive comprehension. In 2005, two of the firms leading this boom, Microsoft and Intel, launched the Ethnographic Praxis in Industry Conference (EPIC), which marked the coming of age of ethnography in industry. An ongoing debate marks the distinction between “anthropology” and “ethnography” and the standards and boundaries of each; nevertheless, anthropology and anthropological methods are recognized as having a useful and important contribution in many corners and functions of the business world, including design, product development, marketing, organizational development, and change management. Several professional associations and branches of the American Anthropological Association, including (but not limited to) the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology, plus the Society for Applied Anthropology, are leaders in promoting these

issues. The concluding keynote speaker at the EPIC in 2005 was Marietta Baba, who had launched the Business Anthropology concentration at Wayne State approximately two decades earlier. (Her keynote can be found at Baba, Marietta, 2005, “To the End of Theory-Practice Apartheid: Encountering the World.” *Ethnographic Praxis in Industry Conference Proceedings*. November 13–15, 2005. Redmond, WA. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Practice of Anthropology.)

In this history, there is the familiar trajectory of scientific innovation moving from universities and laboratories into government and industry—and ultimately making important contributions to the productivity and effectiveness of both. Contemporaneously, the business press began taking notice of anthropology, and anthropological studies of specific products and brands began having an impact in business.

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Growth, of course, creates challenges, and some questions arose alongside the increasing significance of business anthropology:

- ▶ Can anyone call him- or herself an anthropologist?
Should there be a form of credentialing?
- ▶ Do the ethical guidelines of academic research apply to the use of anthropology in industry? Are distinct ethical guidelines needed for Business Anthropology?
- ▶ What responsibility does business anthropology have to contribute to the greater social and economic good beyond project parameters?
- ▶ How should the familiar ethnographic techniques of prolonged immersion be adjusted for the fast-paced demands of contemporary industries?
- ▶ What adjustments are needed within academic training programs to prepare anthropologists for these new opportunities?

Many humanistic and social scientific disciplines—not just anthropology—are facing challenges in an environment that places increasing emphasis on the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) disciplines. As an NSF-designated STEM discipline, anthropology is uniquely situated to bridge this gap and bring new perspectives into technology, design, and management.

Thus, it was in this environment that we organized the Global Business Anthropology Summit, emphasizing “global” to break out of particularistic viewpoints and “summit” (rather than a workshop) to accent what we hoped would be the direction-setting character of the event. Efforts were made both to include leading figures within the specialty and to extend inclusivity to students and emerging practitioners, the voices of change for the next generation.

II. Issues and Agenda

In this context, several business anthropologists around the world felt there was a need to take stock of the directions business anthropology should be taking.

An initial cohort of more than 60 Summit participants was identified through networking and snowball sampling. A steering committee, consisting of eight senior leaders from industry and academia, was also created to oversee Summit preparations:

Marietta Baba	Inga Treitler
Carmen Bueno	Hugo Valenzuela
Ed Liebow	Christina Wasson
Robert Morais	Keiko Yamaki

Names and institutional affiliations of all participants are found in section 7.

Four months prior to the Summit, participants were asked to submit a statement of what they saw as the issues confronting the field. A content analysis of these statements yielded three overriding themes, which provided the substantive framing of the Summit:

- ▶ *Practicalities of the work* – building careers as partners in business
- ▶ *Market trends* – noticing and responding to changes in the business environment, including workplace and lifestyle change and the changing character of urban environments
- ▶ *Future generations* – innovating ways to educate students and professionals across sectors to contribute to the business anthropology of the future

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Discussions among the steering committee developed the following agenda for the Summit:

- 8:30 Welcome by Wayne State University Provost Keith Whitfield
- 8:35 Setting the stage: overview remarks from Allen Batteau, explanation of agenda and logistics
- 8:50 First plenary session: three themes introduced by Rita Denny, Robert Morais, Christina Wasson
- 9:45 Breakout groups
 - 11:10: *Two groups working on the same issue meet to prepare for plenary*
- 11:30 Plenary
 - *Each issue (2 groups) has 10 minutes to present findings*
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 Breakout groups
 - 2:40: *Two groups working on the same issue meet to prepare for plenary*
- 3:00 Break
- 3:30 The future and next steps, including staying connected
- 5:00 Adjourn
- 6:30 Dinner

It was agreed that there would be six breakout groups, and two breakout groups would be assigned to each theme, with each pair comparing notes for the final 20 minutes of the breakout sessions.

III. Opening Plenary Session

*Opening remarks were presented by Rita Denny (co-editor of the *Handbook of Anthropology in Business*); Robert Morais, a professor at Columbia Business School and a former principal of a marketing re-search firm; and Christina Wasson, who heads a leading Business Anthropology program at the University of North Texas.*

Practicalities of the Work

In her opening remarks on the practicalities of the work, **Rita Denny** made several key points, the first of which was the need to fit in to the organization(s) where we want to work. Thus, knowledge of the relevant languages and processes ahead of time is helpful. Her second point, however, was that it is not enough to fit in; in order to steer change, we must both fit in and have an alternate vision of the endeavor. We must be a subtle combination of a member of the organization and an anthropological change agent. Organizations should be treated as field sites, with all of the open-mindedness, attention to language and processes, and curiosity that implies. Labels are power: how we identify ourselves affects how we make markets for ourselves. Labels, however, can be empty and hollow if they are limited to the discourses of business. Business anthropology is more than a research method, and ideally, business anthropologists are many things, from artists and designers and engineers to CEOs. To take on this role, practitioners will need to be creative, ambitious, theoretically adept, and acute observers of and for the work they produce.

Market Trends

In his discussion of market trends, **Robert Morais** suggested three jumping off points for the Summit breakout sessions:

1. Responding to the increasing veneration of data science, especially artificial intelligence
2. Doing more to predict cultural trends that impact business
3. Furthering our role as zeitgeist gurus.

Data science promises more expansive and projectable findings and, for some, greater insights than are obtained through qualitative research. This potential poses an existential threat to qualitative approaches, but also suggests a major opportunity for business anthropologists: we can collaborate with data scientists, together producing high-level analytics and deep analysis. Tricia Wang similarly addresses this idea in her TED Talk, “The Human Insights Missing from Big Data”; we can take her argument further by partnering more intimately with data scientists, not only serving as the ethnographer in the room but helping data scientists to formulate more penetrating questions, conduct closer virtual observations, and incorporate anthropological theory to ignite richer insight generation. Regarding cultural trends, businesses need to anticipate change, and they must have confidence in their forecasts. This point offers anthropologists an opportunity: those involved in technology must work to anticipate change, while those working in marketing and organizational culture—who too often focus more on what is than on what is to come—should find ways to identify cultural change that executives don’t see coming. In sum, business anthropology should find more ways to identify cultural changes that others miss and ensure that businesses have confidence in our work by adding predictive value to our insights. Regarding our role as zeitgeist gurus, business anthropologists are positioned at the intersection of business and culture; more of us should comment publicly on the interaction between the two. Our reflections will have implications for business, for anthropology, and for society at large.

Training the Next Generation of Business Anthropologists

The third set of opening remarks was from **Christina Wasson**, discussing training the next generation of business anthropologists. She began with the observation that business anthropologists have been concerned about this issue for many years. Most did not receive preparation for applied careers in their graduate programs and have seen traditional anthropology graduates fail in the business world because of their lack of preparation. While some anthropology programs provide training in business anthropology, most do not. Wasson suggested that the summit offered an opportunity to envision what the ideal training for future business anthropologists might look like and to develop ideas on how to translate that vision into practice. She suggested keeping in mind three dimensions during Summit discussions. One dimension was the different training contexts: anthropology departments, design schools, or business schools. A second dimension was that each training context can be placed along a continuum of training depth, from a minor focus on business anthropology—perhaps a single course taught by an adjunct—to

a strong focus with dedicated faculty. A third dimension was types of students and their needs. At the University of North Texas (UNT), students tend to cluster into two groups: young students who often have a strong anthropology background but need to learn the cultural logic and practices of working in a business environment, versus established professionals who may be new to anthropology and need to learn our theories and methods and how apply them in fields like design or marketing. Wasson concluded with five learnings from UNT: First, it is valuable to situate business anthropology within applied anthropology. Second, anthropology should be integrated with training in other relevant fields, such as design or marketing. Third, the integration of theory and practice is essential. Fourth, students should be given many applied project experiences through class projects and an applied thesis. And finally, it is helpful to include a class focused on professional skills and thesis client development.

Discussion Points

In the discussion following these presentations, several important points were raised:

A marketing perspective lends emphasis to the new concentration on consumer insights, to which business anthropology can contribute.

We need to collaborate more actively with colleagues within anthropology departments and business schools. Design tracks seem to be open to collaboration because they have literature in the field. Business schools discovered psychology years ago, but there needs to be a differentiation from business anthropology. We need to convey the distinctive value of an anthropological approach to business.

Within higher education, adjunct positions have created an opening to ask for business anthropology courses; the discipline's focus on social innovations connects with student interests.

We are at a critical juncture with the rise of technology giants. Challenges such as consumer privacy and protection require anthropological insights with regard to what is right and what is wrong for individuals, groups, and populations. Wrestling with these subjects in a corporate domain yields complex answers, and while the standards of responsible professional conduct in anthropology are clear, they are perhaps less so in the business world.

The term "business anthropology" itself may present challenges in promoting the distinct value of anthropology in private sector domains. Organizational development, service design, consumer insights, local contexts for global supply chain and end product marketing, user experience research, corporate social responsibility, and other specialties all get lumped together under "business anthropology," which doesn't necessarily communicate its meaning outside an inner circle.

Discussion Points (cont.)

While Gillian Tett of the *Financial Times* has stated that anthropology is a great tool for understanding financial markets, anthropology has done a poor job of communicating its concepts in this area, compared to other disciplines. The cynical nature of money and power has limited business anthropology from evangelizing, although differing traditions in Europe, Asia, and North America have created different configurations of disciplines around and within business anthropology. Due to the financial crisis of the past decade, there is tremendous interest in anthropology, which should result in an amazing opportunity for the discipline to promote and sell itself.

How might an algorithm intrude on the financial risks in a community? Machine learning is neither socially nor culturally neutral. Business anthropology should go beyond a consideration of its risks and engage in discussions of what is righteous and unjust, morally, politically, legally, and ethically. Is machine learning doing the right thing in terms of the people it affects?

Mustafa Abdulla urged business anthropologists not to forget the Global South, which is demonstrably a source of dynamism and innovation. Future summits should accommodate a broad array of world systems perspectives.

The discipline of psychology has made itself available and accessible: Maslow's hierarchy of needs is widely recognized, and anthropological theory should be (but is not yet) similarly recognized. We must be aware of the impact of our language has on our perceived value.

The rise of tech giants and deregulation has created a critical juncture that presents certain challenges, including the primacy of consumers, consumer protection, the risks of autonomous vehicles, and data privacy. If we wrestle with these subjects in a corporate context, we have to understand the domain in which they will be presented. The discipline of anthropology has standards of responsible professional conduct, but the applicability of these standards to the business context needs to be monitored continuously.

Melissa Fisher observed that business anthropology, organizational anthropology, and critical management studies are undertaking similar tasks; the emerging geographies of government dictate that business anthropology will continue to face new intellectual challenges.

IV. Breakout Discussions

After the plenary papers were presented, participants broke into six groups. Each group was assigned one of the three key issues identified in the months leading up to the event (with two groups per issue).

This section summarizes some of that discussion and offers two concrete proposals: One suggests ways to make anthropology more visible to the general public. The other offers ideas for helping future clients get a sense of how anthropologists address problems. The next section describes the consensus points from the discussions and proposes concrete “next steps” for each point.

The presentation here reflects the wide-ranging character of the breakout discussions. Anthropology’s global perspective frames the entire discussion, even though it is not always articulated. As the Science of Humanity, anthropology is committed to inclusiveness and an avoidance of ethnocentrism. It became clear over the course of the Summit that “business” has different meanings in different nations, and is sometimes associated with specific national practices. Thus, “business anthropology” acquires different meanings in Europe, the United States, Mexico, and Japan, a point that we will elaborate on at the end of this section.

1. Practicalities of Work

Our first issue is the *practicalities of work*. A quick take: As with any other field site, we need to fit in to the businesses or organizations we are working within in order to be productive, even if our objective is a reconfiguration of the organization. This includes understanding the language of that organization’s industry. As field scientists, practitioners, and professional boundary-spanners, anthropologists are uniquely positioned to fit in and empathetically understand the issues of many businesses, networks, organizations, and industries.

We are most productive when we are working within existing organizational structures and work flows. Our work includes contributing to and influencing outcomes, including steering changes in business practices. It is not in our interest to be defined by others (see the next paragraph on branding).

We need to be attentive to certain issues within organizations, including:

- ▶ Where we are positioned in relation to “product lines”
- ▶ How far we are located organizationally from the C-suite
- ▶ What kinds of spans of organizational control we have
- ▶ The extent to which we are hiring managers
- ▶ The nature and extent to which we have access to “triple bottom line” decision making (environmental, social responsibility, and organizational governance)
- ▶ Other ways that we contribute to the success of the organizations that employ and/or retain us, and demonstrating our value in more compelling and concrete ways

Overall, attending to these issues is best served by rigor and discipline in our methods in order to create and communicate insights. We should play up and “own” our distinctive methods (which, at present, are not fully codified) and insist on standards, for example, in ethnography. Business anthropology, both within the academy and within industry, will always exist in an interdisciplinary environment, and our ability to make translations across boundaries will be part of our success.

2. Branding, Marketing, and Market Trends

The second overarching issue is *branding, marketing, and market trends*. A quick take: Our identity and reputation—or “brand,” as it’s known in the business world—will be found within a framework that resonates, such as “turning information into insights.” The rhetoric and poetics of a brand not only frame the brand but, when successful, allow everything to fall into place. The world can have confidence in the intellectual rigor and quality of work. We breathe life into abstract numbers, provide a context for understanding the world around us by taking the long and comparative view, and communicate what we observe in a way that makes sense, turning information into insights.

Some elements of branding and marketing include a focus on messaging and tag lines or catchphrases—and perhaps celebrity

promotion (and we do have celebrities to promote). Professional associations can help by building and maintaining a repository of marketing resources, including success stories, business cases, and “fast facts” that practitioners can have at their fingertips to explain what we do. Professional associations can also help us increase the reach and frequency of a well-defined audience contact. If anthropology wishes to be as well known in the business world as psychology is, we need more focused organization. How do we keep the flag of anthropology present? We do not always do a good job of explaining what we are doing, so some attention to merchandising (in the sense of market positioning) would be useful here. Perhaps a short, “fast facts” list of anthropological contributions to business that we can all recite. We should be able to tell stories about solving problems, translating stories into achievements. Other disciplines are tackling issues of User Experience (UX), change management, and corporate culture, and we have to explain how a background in anthropology adds even greater value. At an executive level, we need greater awareness and education.

Another way to open ethnography and anthropology to the broader public is through “Open-Source Ethnography.” Like all open-source software, an open-source ethnography would create a platform for people to explore ethnography, perhaps with multiple projects that hook into an overall project. It goes without saying that Open-Source Ethnography would choose topics that are timely and relevant to contemporary issues. Open-Source Ethnography needs a business model and leadership that is sensitive to ethical concerns and boundaries and requires levels of expertise to assure responsible results. Other open-source efforts such as Wikipedia and Linux offer useful precedents.

3. Training of Future Generations of Anthropologists

A third area of focus is the *training of future generations of anthropologists*. A quick take: We need to collectively envision the ideal training that contributes to the field’s sustainability and how to translate that vision into practice.

What defines us as anthropologists?

- ▶ How do we retain an identity as a field while adapting to the demands of changing conditions in the world of work?

- ▶ Training, credentials, collaborations, and institutional support for ongoing professional development are all part of this visioning/translation effort

We need to recognize that training takes place in three distinct contexts that are quite different in different countries and regions:

- ▶ Anthropology departments
- ▶ Design schools
- ▶ Business schools

What skill development areas should be our focus?

- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Collaboration
- ▶ Quantitative literacy
- ▶ Digital literacy
- ▶ Intellectual self-confidence, especially the confidence to tack between “high” and “low” thinking
- ▶ Measurement of change/accountability

In university departments, there are strong external pressures for change. Anthropology departments in public universities are going to be pressured to explain what their students can contribute to economic growth and sustainability, and it is good to be part of the conversation on the transformation of higher education (pressure on the liberal arts, rising student debt, etc.). Moreover, anthropological perspectives can be used to make sense of the economic crisis, both intellectually and practically. There need to be more effective conversations among anthropologists in a variety of employments, with some potential points of intervention being adjunct positions, workshops, the American Anthropological Association and its subsections. For example, adjunct faculty have an important role to play in representing practitioner experience in academic departments. Students often want these kinds of conversations and interventions, and the students have to convince the departments.

Question Raised

How prepared are business anthropology graduates for the workforce?

They need to have the ability to roam, to work as part of co-creative teams. Skills in relationship building at all levels of a corporate hierarchy are part of this preparation. We should minimize the orthodoxy of labels: for example, terms like “research” in the business world often imply a waste of time, while the label “anthropologist” is not always interpreted well. The multiple subfields of anthropology are rarely understood outside the academy; we need to demystify “anthropologist.”

The larger context for training future generations lies in the future of the academy. Higher education is under tremendous pressure to prove its utility, with rising student debt and shrinking public budgets. As noted earlier, anthropological perspectives can be used to make sense of the economic crisis; within academia, we need to be positioned where political decisions are made.

4. Global Perspective

A final issue that came up in the breakout groups was the *global perspective*. To summarize: Anthropology takes on a quite different character in different countries, and perhaps the greatest contribution that business anthropology could make would be to synthesize these perspectives.

What is the diverse array of models that have been used by business anthropology to present what we do in different spaces? The views from the EU and North America are different: looking at the good of the people versus a pragmatic search for opportunities. What is our motivation? Some places do not use the word “business” at all; they don’t want the word “business” in the department, and they use “organizational anthropology” instead. Would “applied anthropologist” be more appropriate? In Japan, for example, business anthropology has a substantially different character, not based on market trends. There, business + anthropology does not have the same meaning as business anthropology in America. For example, one Japanese study focused on workers in urban areas, peasants who had migrated to the cities. In 2010, one Japanese participant in the Summit organized a forum on Business Anthropology in Sacred Spaces. The sacred world in Japan is different from the practical

world: there is a sacred dimension within the company, examples of which include company funerals, company museums, company rituals, and other examples.

Several leading questions emerged from the breakout discussions. These should form the basis for ongoing discussion. In brief, they are:

- ▶ ***What are the specific goals of business anthropology?*** What does it mean to help a business achieve its objectives through valuing anthropology? Part of this might be uncovering processes such as teamwork or conflict, consumer activity, or management culture. This point is less an original insight but rather a recommendation that our insights in these areas can be disseminated and applied more broadly. Anthropology should become a crucial perspective for problem solving. Can business anthropology contribute to an enlarged perspective on organizations and institutions more generally in contemporary society, including governments, not-for-profits, labor unions, and voluntary associations?
- ▶ ***Where will the business come from?*** In a business engagement, why have we been chosen over other areas of expertise? Our ability to build on and interpret quantitative data can be part of this choice, along with our skills in relationship-building and boundary spanning. Other important contributions include bringing in a systems perspective, as well as understanding both hard and soft systems and a broader social context.
- ▶ ***Who will provide the growth?*** We can use corporate clients for this discussion, but this question could be applied to other targets as well: students, practicing anthropologists, academic departments, and the general public. Within a company, this point could apply to research and development, marketing, upper and mid-level management, and organizational development managers (human resources, employee engagement, recruiting). Other, non-corporate organizations should also be part of this discussion.
- ▶ ***What do potential users of anthropology target right now?*** Data scientists are in demand, and “people problems” often

are handed to psychologists. Some companies do hire social scientists, especially for innovation groups. Anthropologists may be more adept at examining complexity.

- ▶ ***What do we want our potential clients to do?*** Perhaps they can see the need for anthropology to interpret data. We should encourage participation with other disciplines and have them involved with anthropology. We should invite businesspeople to speak at anthropology departments and turn our students into ambassadors for anthropology.
- ▶ ***What experience will change clients' behavior?*** Some useful approaches might include case studies demonstrating value, interactions with anthropologists, publications intended for the general public, TED talks, short videos, co-creation opportunities, and having taglines and models that are easy to grasp. We need to place more focus on educating clients.
- ▶ ***What are the pivotal moments for changing behavior?*** Solutions here might include defining and/or reframing problems, interpretation and analysis, and interventions “when things break.” We need an approach to diagnosing clients’ readiness or maturity levels.
- ▶ ***How will we measure behavioral change?*** Repeat business and referrals are a very good yardstick. Building the clients’ internal capacity is usually a win. Implementation of recommendations is an indicator of success. Some other measurable business results include quality, efficiency, innovation, and service.

In sum, the breakout discussions were intense, well-informed, and provocative for the challenges ahead.

V. Cross-Cutting Issues

At the summit, there were several cross-cutting issues that permeated all or most of the six breakout groups. Naturally these issues are larger in scale, as they seek to cover multiple aspects of business anthropology. While each group talked about these issues as they related to their specific topic, they often overlapped in their discussions. Four main themes were identified, along with several more subthemes.

Major Themes

1. Communicating Value
2. Standards of Responsible Professional Conduct
3. Relationship Building
4. Skills and Training

1. Communicating Value

⋮ This is a very broad theme that covers a lot of ground. When we talk about communication, it is more than just having conversations; in order for business anthropology to grow, communication needs to be focused and intentional. Our communication needs to play to our strengths and value and engage with a wider audience than academic anthropology. The teams identified three important topics.

First, communicating the value of anthropology in business is extremely important, which suggests the usefulness of a mass media presence. To continue the growth that we have seen so far, our value must be understood by organizations, which means anthropology must make a big push to promote its value in a business setting. If anthropology is just seen as a niche market, then growth will be harder to come by. The biggest question is: how do we enter mainstream business and make anthropology indispensable to companies? This is not an easy task, particularly given the tendency of most anthropology departments to keep out of the public sphere, at least in the United States. Other anthropology departments across the world can give us a good idea of how to communicate our value. In business-government-NGO career paths, the main emphasis is in training aspirants to focus on how they can contribute to the organization's success. This focus marks a big shift in thinking—away from the individual and toward the organization.

During the summit there was some serious discussion about hiring a PR firm to promote business anthropology. By creating a tag line and a brand, business anthropologists would be able to better communicate their value. Many ideas were raised about how to handle branding, since our branding needs serious consideration. One anthropologist commented, “Overall, the branding of the field is in a bad place.” By using some of the suggestions in this section, business anthropology can begin to position itself according to its strengths. One participant put it well: “A lot of anthropologists are not forces of change, but not against change. Anthropologists have to be a part of the conversation and not just pointing out the flaws and describing the problems. We struggle with this.” Change is necessary for the growth of business anthropology. In order for the change to be lasting, it cannot be driven by outside forces, but must come from within the business anthropology community. Many may feel that they are not in positions to effect change, but advocating for anthropology when the opportunity arises can lead to change. It is important that students receive the right training in order to create value. (This point will be covered in more depth under skills and training.)

Second, insights are important, but they are not often fully understood. This point is especially true in anthropology, where insights gained are rarely translated into actionable items. If business anthropology is to thrive, then anthropologists must get better at communicating. Many currently in the field are well practiced at translating insights, but for new anthropologists and students, this process can feel unnatural. Changes will come as students learn more about the needs of businesses and how to turn insights into action. As more anthropologists are employed by companies, their insights will be more valued as they prove effective.

“We should be able to tell stories—this was the problem and this was how we solved it. We need to translate stories into achievements.”

Business anthropology is positioned in a liminal area, which allows us to see multiple perspectives, and part of our strength comes from the unique perspectives that we are able to provide through insight. “Liminality is our trade and we can build consensus by communicating other views”—that is, viewpoints from the edges. This is one of anthropology’s great strengths, but we have to be effective in communicating these views. When we are able to communicate multiple or synthesized perspectives, we provide invaluable resources to companies.

Finally, an important part of communicating value is public engagement. Anthropology has often been misunderstood, due in part to its lack of outreach,

though this has been changing as more anthropology is localized. In business anthropology, engagement is a must, since business anthropologists often become the voices of the consumers, making sure their needs are met. There is still a long way to go, but there are examples of how we can engage effectively (University of Copenhagen). In Europe, public engagement is an expected part of academia, and academia demonstrates its value more easily.

The summit provided a lot of opportunities for people to reflect on public engagement. Many ideas were presented that are easily within reach:

- ▶ Publishing books for the general public
- ▶ TED Talks
- ▶ Accessibility to the mainstream through podcasts and YouTube
- ▶ Short videos/demonstration
- ▶ Apps
- ▶ Booklet as a tangible offer to business
- ▶ The Anthropologists Accord
- ▶ Open-source Anthropology

While the business anthropology community has the opportunity to address many of the concerns regarding public engagement, there is still a larger issue at hand. In the United States, many academic departments struggle with how to engage the public to the point that they don't try. At the University of Copenhagen, in contrast, the anthropology department regularly engages with the business public in the following ways:

- ▶ Bringing in employers
- ▶ Opening up the discourse
- ▶ Asking them for their needs
- ▶ Reciprocal conversations with practitioners

Engaging with the public is important to the growth of anthropology. Changes within anthropology departments will be necessary, but they are key to business anthropology's future success. Notable discussions throughout the summit showed that business anthropology and its clients can benefit from a tool to help enterprises use ethnographic insights to contribute to the greater social and economic good. In the final section of this report, we provide an example via an initial iteration of one such tool, The Anthropologists Accord.

Nearly every group agreed upon the use of case studies to promote business anthropology to the business community. There are many case studies in circulation already (ReD Associates), but they are not always well known. There have been several articles published in popular business press

about anthropology, but these could be seen as a novelty. In order to show our consistent value as anthropologists, we must demonstrate what we provide. Anthropologists can use case studies to expand into the business world and demonstrate their value and capacity for creating more opportunities.

However, not all case studies are created equal, and one participant brought up the danger of relying too heavily on case studies to present our message: “Problems of case studies: if it is too brief and not enough depth anyone feels like they can do it. They are ‘ethnographers’; if it is too complex it costs too much money and the meaning gets lost.” Thus, we have to be very intentional about what we send out. How do we want to communicate our value? If a case study can do that, then send it out, but we must be aware of the risks.

On multiple occasions, participants brought up the possibility of creating a pamphlet that shows the value of anthropology and can be easily distributed. This idea has the potential to increase awareness of the discipline. How it is made and what goes in it will be another conversation. The key point with a pamphlet is to get an idea across quickly. Creating more materials aimed at companies will help anthropology’s image.

2. Standards of Responsible Professional Conduct

∴ Ethics is a major concern to anyone associated with business anthropology and was a major topic for the Summit participants. In academia, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) is designed to protect the interests of participants in a study. In business, there is not a standard ethical code, so business anthropologists must work one out themselves. With recent events (e.g., Facebook and Cambridge Analytica), more thought needs to be given to ethics.

“We are at a critical juncture with the rise of technology giants in society: challenges such as privacy for consumers and their protection with safety. What is right and what is wrong for individuals, groups and the population. If we are to wrestle with these subjects in a corporate domain, they become complex answers. We used to have a robust ethical code. Now it is suited but ambiguous.”

At this point, it seems the AAA code of ethics plays very little role in business. Thus, the ethics of anthropologists working in business must be internal. They

must hold themselves to a higher standard and advocate for a higher ethical standard in their company.

Many good ideas came out of Summit discussions. The ideas may vary based on the industry an anthropologist works in, but this provides a good starting point:

- ▶ Challenges such as privacy for consumers, opening risks of autonomous vehicles; bringing about issues of what's right/wrong for various groups and populations
- ▶ Corporate context: understand the domains in which technology engages
- ▶ Looping back with participants at multiple stages of the design process
- ▶ “Did I understand you right?”
- ▶ Let participants know what happened to the product
- ▶ Educate business teams about ethics; internal IRB

One point that was brought up was the “Anthropologists’ Accord,” introduced at the beginning of a discussion. The Accord is patterned after the Designer’s Accord and is supposed to dictate behavior in the public sphere. While many found this idea intriguing, there are many practical problems that may arise. First, there is nobody to ensure that these rules are followed, so compliance is entirely based on personal commitment. That is not necessarily a bad thing, but it makes it is hard to regulate. Next, the needs of companies vary widely, and research may not always fit neatly into the accord. Lastly, the power of some anthropologists may not be enough convince their employers to comply. The question is: how do we get companies on board with this idea?

Ethical problems can never be fully resolved. Right now, we can make sure that we are holding ourselves to the highest standards and ensure that we are properly training the next generation of anthropologists.

3. Relationship Building

Any good anthropologist can quickly build and maintain relationships. There are two areas where business anthropologists must build stronger relationships: with each other and with private and public sector organizations. First, relationship building is important within the business anthropology community. There needs to be a stronger community of business anthropologists, which events like the Summit and awareness at the American Anthropological Association (AAA) annual meeting are designed to address. This

∴ Summit and other efforts have served as good starting points, but
∴ there is much still to be done.

It is also important to build relationships in the internal anthropological community with other anthropologists at our universities. In the most traditional anthropology departments, business anthropology is not looked on favorably—though this is beginning to change. Nevertheless, there seems to be a sense among traditional anthropologists that business anthropology has sold out for the lure of money and other capitalistic gains. It is thus important to the success of business anthropology to educate and inform other anthropologists about the benefits of business anthropology.

“Academia needs to educate colleagues within anthropology departments and business schools. Design tracks seem to be open because they have literature in the field. They invoke anthropology as a mantra. Business schools discovered psychology years ago, but there needs to be a differentiation. Making inroads into the curriculum of business schools. Sell it! Take them to lunch; market business anthropology to business academia. AAA in the 90s had the forethought to overcome prejudice of BAs in anthropology. BAs are real anthropologists with real research with real employment, only not in an exotic market. Confront the negative comments.”

The American Anthropological Association has a keen interest in seeing the success of business anthropology and wants events like this summit to succeed. The executive director of the AAA offered some insight: Six years into his role, he sees the principal agencies of change as the academic departments of anthropology; they are the sites of intervention, and it's important to nudge them. There are resources and support to aid in educating departments, but business anthropologists will need to take the initiative in engaging their coworkers.

Second, with regard to external organizations and constituencies, if we look at business, engineering, and medical schools, we see a vast network of contacts, funding, and internships that can prepare students for work in their respective fields. These networks are more difficult to come by in anthropolo-

gy, but they are also becoming more important. Students are not receiving the training that they need to be successful in a business setting, but by partnering with outside organizations, we can increase training opportunities, draw others to the field of anthropology, and allow the field to grow.

There was a lot of discussion with regard to building relationships with outside organizations. We see three fundamental ways to achieve this:

- ▶ Active pursuit of internships by anthropology departments. Make anthropology departments visible to corporations and consultant firms.
- ▶ Develop relationships with news/media.
- ▶ Faculty members with relationships with companies should bring those companies into the classroom.

As companies gain more exposure to anthropology, they will become more comfortable with our methods and analysis. Hiding our thought processes and theories should become a thing of the past, even if it's tricky to make that happen. We must teach all anthropologists and anthropology students how to build relationships and sell our skills.

4. Skills and Training

There was a lot of discussion about how to train new business anthropologists and what they need in order to be successful, and there was no shortage of ideas. The overwhelming conclusion was that we need to train anthropologists differently; anthropologists need to be multifaceted and steeped in multidisciplinary methods. For some areas of business anthropology, that is a natural approach (design anthropology), but for others, greater adaptation and interpretation is required. Indeed, the difficulty with training is that it often needs to be very specific. A design anthropologist will require different skills than one who does marketing. Business anthropologists first need to understand business terms, research methods, and other entrepreneurial skills. Most departments are not equipped to teach these skills, so building connections with business schools can allow students to get the training they need. At present, some students have found it necessary to combine an anthropology degree with another degree, whether in design, business, or engineering.

Below are suggestions by many of the participants:

- ▶ Theory and methods—qualitative
- ▶ Quantitative comfort
- ▶ Business training
- ▶ Design
- ▶ AGILE (Design Research) is contemporary ethnography (working in short periods/quick research, then ideate)
- ▶ Soft skills—empathy, understanding, human-centered design
- ▶ Maintain one's identity as an anthropologist of some kind
- ▶ Multiple levels of expertise—deepest in one area
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Collaboration
- ▶ Digital literacy
- ▶ Intellectual self-confidence
- ▶ Quantitative literacy

An endless number of skills could be on this list. Anthropology departments teach some of these skills well, but there are others that departments are not equipped to teach. That is where outside relationships are important: by bringing in practitioners who have the needed expertise, anthropology departments can teach the students the skills they need. Departments can also create relationships with other departments, since having students take classes outside of anthropology will also facilitate multidisciplinary training.

VI. Next Steps and Moving Forward

Judging by the intensity of the discussion and the diversity of viewpoints, we conclude that this conversation should be carried forward. The Global Business Anthropology Summit 2019 is planned for May 28 to 30, 2019, at Fordham University in New York City, and discussions are underway for a 2020 and 2021 Summit.

In terms of advancing the field, we identify three major areas where work could begin right away:

1. Making our voices more important
2. Advancing the training of Business Anthropology practitioners and scholars
3. Creating resources for promoting Business Anthropology

Some actions that can be taken to make our voices more important include:

- ▶ Looking at larger data sources.
- ▶ Building a case to get our point across and being prepared to convey it from a position of authority and strength; for example, increased earnings. The results must be quantified in a business manner. Building case studies is a craft, and we need to find the balance between depth and accessibility, complexity and insight.
- ▶ The American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) was given as an example. It has an array of pamphlets that explain graphic design; anthropology could create a similar product as a way of selling anthropology.
- ▶ We need an electronic repository of our work. This repository could include the best cases of the past five, ten, or fifteen years. It should be marketed to the public; we need a bigger place for ourselves. Grant McCracken's book *Chief Culture Officer* examines this point. AAA is building an open-access anthropological research repository for the *whole discipline*. As currently envisioned, this repository will be available

for anthropologists anywhere to upload various file types—case studies, conference papers, technical reports, posters, course syllabi, multimedia—that can be accessible to all at no charge. If the conference paper, report, or poster goes on to be accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal or a book, the repository will also include the ability to link to the article of record.

- ▶ We need “public anthropologists” in the manner of “public intellectuals” in other disciplines. For example, we could publish in venues such as the *Huffington Post*; Robert Morais wrote an article there about *Mad Men*. We would need people from different regions and specialties.
- ▶ The Center for Business Analytics at the University of Copenhagen provides an example of a center with an interdisciplinary focus and a team-oriented approach as well that works with multinational corporations.

Actions that could advance the training of business practitioners and scholars include:

- ▶ Building relationships with business schools and design schools.
- ▶ Incorporating practitioner viewpoints in graduate training.
- ▶ Creating internship and practicum opportunities within businesses.
- ▶ Building long-term, in-depth relationships between academic anthropology departments and businesses in technological, manufacturing, and service industries.

Resources that could be created for promoting business anthropology, in collaboration with professional associations such as the AAA (American Anthropology Association) or SfAA (the Society for Applied Anthropology), should include:

- ▶ A repository of case studies.
- ▶ A speakers bureau.
- ▶ Periodic press releases on public accomplishments.

Establishing a mechanism with adequate resources for pursuing these objectives is an immediate task.

One direction of movement discussed within the breakout groups was the “Anthropologists’ Accord,” originally drafted by Inga Treitler and circulated

among colleagues, and revised. The Accord is presented at the end of this section. The Anthropologists' Accord is a statement of how business anthropology can contribute to the greater social and economic good. It provides sample actions and steps that anthropologists can take on their own or in collaboration with clients. It is a representation of a rarely articulated notion that draws anthropologists to the field and creates community—that is, the desire to build empathy and, in the simplest terms, to “do good.” A copy was handed to each moderator of the Summit breakout groups, and each moderator provided the Facebook page to the group members: <https://www.facebook.com/anthropologistsaccord/>. The immediate purpose of the Accord was to provide those of us at the Summit with a tool for discussing issues of anthropologists' broader influence. In that sense, the document is not definitive and, as expected, does not represent all of the viewpoints in the discussion groups. For example, we cannot firmly trust that we can use this Accord to start similar conversations with all clients without alienating the client. Indeed, anthropologists must assess and judge for themselves how to put the content of the document to work. The goal is to plant a seed among anthropologists to create new and subtle ways of representing anthropological concerns and opening up discussions with clients that will make it easier for clients to take steps toward social and environmental stewardship and responsibility beyond their project parameters. In the next month, a web site will be developed to house the Accord.

In sum, business anthropology has a wealth of strengths, opportunities, and challenges, yet like any rapidly growing activity, it must set its own direction and priorities. The Global Business Anthropology Summit of 2018 was an initial step in this direction.

Anthropologists' Accord: *Beginning the Discussion*

The Anthropologists' Accord is a commitment by anthropologists to dedicate their ethnographer's gift to mentor and reveal to at least one organization or enterprise the opportunity for positive impact on environmental and social challenges, and to direct that enterprise to donate or set aside an amount matching the anthropologist's budget to further that cause.

Motivation

Our work exposes us daily and with a critical and analytical eye to the systemic structures of daily life and organizational and business interests. In the process of identifying new ways to do business and build profit on behalf of clients, we also see beyond client engagements to the broader implications of our recommendations.

Values Statement

We take responsibility, over time, to use any knowledge and analysis from our research, including any out-of-scope findings, to enhance human dignity and opportunity by sharing with the public the view of the broadest context of our work, including speculation about unanticipated consequences, and solicit collaboration with others whose research has identified similar findings.

Sample Practical Measures

We agree to take measures to encourage sustainable and humanitarian practice in enterprise:

1. Avoid divisiveness in our studies (minimize US-THEM or hierarchical thinking)
2. Partner with trade groups
3. Publicly declare commitment to the Accord (e.g., on web sites, in signatures, on LinkedIn Profiles, in CVs)
4. Be aware of and transparent about our ethical footprint
5. Open opportunities, model critical (anthropological) thinking, and mentor others
6. Participate in and contribute to cross-sector Anthropologists' Accord projects, for example:
 - _ Build a toolkit of things that anthropologists should consider when delivering ethnographic research and insights to enterprises.
 - _ List concerns that anthropologists should consider when integrating sustainability (to be carefully defined) into ethnographic studies and practice.
7. Identify humanitarian and social undertakings that advance human wellbeing and dedicate pro bono time to raising funds to deliver, for example:
 - _ Create press kits for bringing general awareness to the anthropological turn in enterprises.
 - _ Crowdfund and provide sleeping bags to homeless people in nearby cities, or partner with homeless people in activities including musical performance, reclaiming abandoned homes, etc.
 - _ Engage in waste education and reduction in schools and communities
 - _ Offer expert witness testimony in court cases.
 - _ Others to be identified through the anthropological lenses of our work—in other words...take the extra insights from our work and give back suitably.

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VIII. Bibliographical Resources

The bibliography presented here is intended simply as a starting point for any who wish to explore Business Anthropology further. In addition to two leading journals (*The Journal of Business Anthropology*, Greg Urban, editor, and *The International Journal of Business Anthropology*, Robert Tian, editor), only books are listed here.

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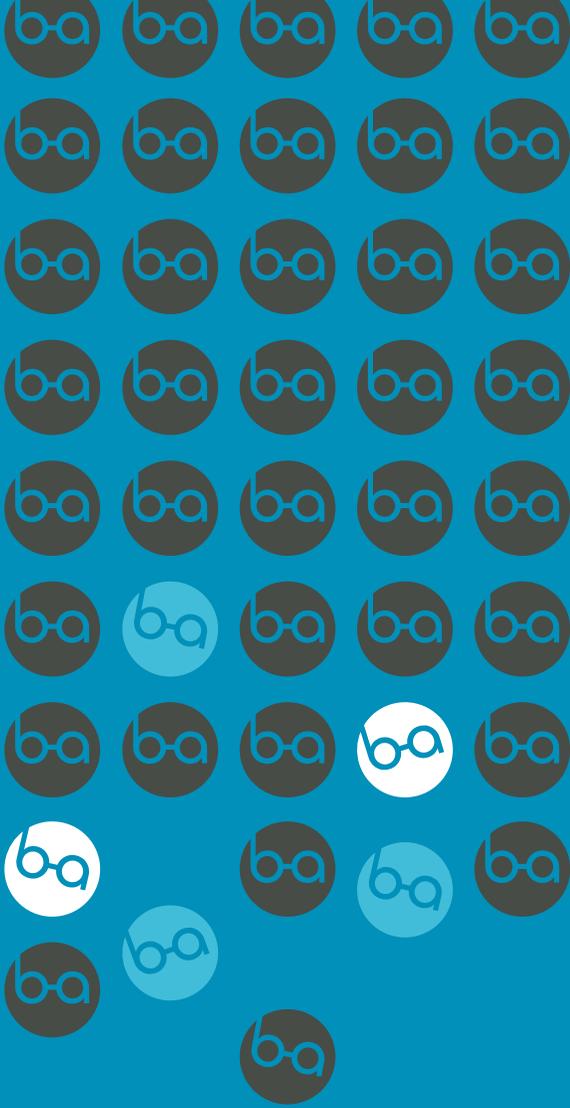
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