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THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF THE CORPORATE HISTORIAN / ARCHIVIST

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Abstract: The corporate historian/archivist is a relatively recent innovation. While historians have had a long historical association with corporations, as researchers, biographers or consultants, the notion of an embedded, in-house professional with formal roles and responsibilities seems to emerge in US Fortune 100 corporations only in the 1980s. Prior to this, the core professional identity of the historian was as an “academic historian” whose institutional affiliation was closely attached to the university. The emergence of the corporate historian, however, has created tensions and questions among historians and offers an ideal context within which to examine the relationship between dominant institutions and processes of professionalization.

This study examines the intimate but unarticulated relationship between professions and institutions. Specifically, it elaborates the argument that, as a dominant institution, the corporation has replaced the nation-state as the primary engine for generating new professions. The manifestation of the corporate archivist/historian raises a number of interesting theoretical and empirical questions. When and how did the corporate historian emerge? Why now and not contemporaneously with the historical emergence of the corporate form? What is the professional project of the corporate historian and how does it differ from that of the academic historian? What are the implications of the production of history within the institutional context of the modern corporation for history, itself?

Bio: Roy Suddaby is the Winspear Chair of Management at the Peter B. Gustavson School of Business, University of Victoria, Canada and a Research Professor at Newcastle University Business School. He is an honorary professor at Copenhagen Business School.

Roy is a past editor of the *Academy of Management Review* and is or has been an editorial board member of the *Academy of Management Journal*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Organization Studies*, *Journal*

of Management Studies, and the *Scandinavian Management Review*. He has won best-paper awards from the *Academy of Management Journal*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, and the Administrative Sciences Association of Canada as well as the Greif Research Impact Award from the Academy of Management. Roy named Distinguished Scholar Award by the Administrative Sciences Association of Canada and Ascendant Scholar and JMI Scholar by the Western Academy of Management. Thompson Reuters named Roy to their list of world's most highly cited researchers in business and economics in 2014 and 2015.

His research focuses on organizational change and the intersection between business and society. Current projects include a study of the changing role of the corporation in society.