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Louise Roy: Intrapreneurship Through Organizational Change (Case A, B, C, and D)

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Louise Roy: Intrapreneurship Through Organizational Change[1]

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HEC MONTRÉAL

Abstract

In cases A, B, C and D, the authors describe the career of Louise Roy, a woman who has shown outstanding leadership in the organizations she has managed. The basis for her leadership lies in her training as a sociologist and her fundamental interest in human beings, but beyond this, there is also Louise Roy the person and her ability to commit. She is not afraid of taking risks, making courageous choices or seizing opportunities. Very few Canadians have held such senior positions in major European multinationals. Throughout her very unusual career, she has always been guided by a constant desire to be herself and an ongoing focus on organizational innovation.

Case A(1985-1992), Ms. Roy has been appointed by the government of Québec to manage structural changes in one of the most difficult organization in the state, i.e. the Transport Authority of Montreal (8,000 employees), which serves through a network of buses and metro lines the island of Montreal.

Case B (1992-2003) describes her management experience implementing structural changes at Air France Americas Division first and later at IATA's more traditional North American environment.
Case C (2003-present time) is the description of the CIRANO leadership Forum held once a month on various topics (management, innovation, expertise, mobility…), her appointment as Chancellor of the University of Montreal and some reflexions on her unusual career path.

Case D (Late 1940s-late 1970s) puts the emphasis on two important aspects of her upbringing: family background and education in a changing Québec society. Equally important is the description of some early experiences as a monitor in summer camps and her Graduate studies in Sociology at Madison, Wisconsin.

These cases are discussed at various levels (MBA, MS and Graduate Diplomas, and Bachelor's) in Intrapreneurship, Visionary and Entrepreneurial Thinking, Managerial and Strategic Craft, Management Skills, Strategic Management, Entrepreneurial Craft, Entrepreneurial Project Planning, and Management courses.

KEY WORDS: Intrapreneurship, Organizational Change, Leadership.

Louise Roy: Intrapreneurship Through Organizational Change[1]

Case A
1985-1992

Summary

Louise Roy has been appointed by the government of Québec to manage structural changes in one of the most difficult organization in the state, i.e. the Transport Authority of Montreal (8,000 employees), which serves through a network of buses and metro lines the island of Montreal.

RESTRUCTURING A MAJOR PUBLIC AGENCY: CEO OF THE STCUM

"… we've talked about it at the executive level and we think you'd be a good candidate. Would you accept? If so, we'll have to submit your name to the Cabinet within the next two days." I remember it as though it were yesterday, even though it's more than 20 years ago now! I panicked terribly: "If you're serious, you have to give me at least a week to think about whether I really want to put myself in a situation like this, with 8,000 employees, in an organization that's in trouble!" … I didn't sleep for a week …" (Louise Roy, May 2007).

THE FIRST WOMAN TO HEAD AN URBAN TRANSIT CORPORATION IN CANADA

"A 37-year-old woman at the head of a complex agency!" This was how the Montreal press welcomed Louise Roy, who had just agreed to take over the reins of the Montreal Urban Community Transit Commission, commonly known by its French acronym STCUM[2]. The board had 8,000 employees and an annual operating budget of $6 million. Her predecessor, Lawrence Hanigan, a political leader and heavyweight player in Montreal's municipal authority, left the agency in mid-May 1984.

What the headlines did not say, however, was that the Québec Cabinet chose Louise Roy over several other high-level candidates, including an internal candidate who was already General Operations Manager and whose name had been proposed for the position of commission president by the Montreal Urban Community (MUC).
Louise Roy headed the STCUM from March 1985 to July 1992. It was the first time a woman had been appointed to the top position of such a large public agency in Canada. She was comparatively young, with virtually no managerial experience, but she knew the transit field inside-out[3].

Her new agency was responsible for urban transit on the Island of Montreal – in other words, surface transit by bus, underground transit by metro, adapted transit for the disabled and fleet maintenance through an extensive network of garages.

Louise Roy was anxious to ensure that everyone concerned received the consideration they deserved, and made sure she had the support of the City of Montreal executive committee chair, Yvon Lamarre. At her first press conference, she was accompanied by Pierre Desmarais, the MUC President, and she had also approached the organization's General Operating Manager to make sure he would remain loyal.

TOWARDS A MORE OPEN AND TRANSPARENT FORM OF MANAGEMENT AND CALMER LABOUR RELATIONS

Her first term of office, which began in March 1985, lasted approximately a year and a half, and was followed by a second, five-year term that ended in late 1991. During this period, Louise Roy had to implement the new Act of Parliament converting the former transit commission into a transit board, with its own board of directors. What the Act did not openly state was that she also had to "repair the terrible organizational climate". Was the change of name, from "commission" to "board", purely cosmetic? "We changed the name to show that we were also changing the board of directors"; the Act stipulated that local elected representatives would henceforth direct the STCUM[4].

Before 1985, the leadership teams at the transit commission and the City of Montreal tended to overlap, to such an extent that the same person could preside both the Urban Community and the commission. This was the case of the former president, Lawrence Hanigan. The commission was managed as though it were a private enterprise. Its board of directors was composed of three people, namely the president, Lawrence Hanigan, and two commissioners, Mr. Synder for the City of Montreal and Mr. Tremblay for the suburbs. They occupied adjoining offices, and met whenever the need arose. When one of the three decided to hold a meeting, he simply went to get the other two, and asked the secretary to take notes.

THE "LADY IN PINK" IN THE FIELD: LISTENING, COMMUNICATION AND TRUST

Before she began to think about setting up a proper board of directors, Louise Roy gave herself three months, from April to June, 1985, to learn about the organization, consult its stakeholders and understand how things worked. Among other things, she was keen to discover why, just a few months before her appointment, supervisors from the Crémazie workshop were taken hostage and why the anti-riot squad had to be called in to free them. She decided to tour the entire organization and its various workshops. For her first meeting – even though the Operations Manager tried to persuade her not to do so – she chose one of the organization's hardcore elements, the Crémazie bus repair shop. This is how she describes her first visit:

> "I'd been thrown into an organization I didn't really know, and I was completely alone, with no network and no mentor. So I had to rely on my instinct and intuition ... I walked into what was essentially a garage, a repair shop with pictures of naked women on the walls and a bunch of guys swearing and talking about brakes. When I first arrived at the STCUM, I don't know why, but I got the idea of buying myself a fancy pink suit. That day, I was wearing my suit, and I'll always remember how surprised the employees were. It was the first time they'd ever met the organization's president ... I got them together in small groups ... It took all morning ... It wasn't hard to understand that the guys had such a hardcore mentality because of their outdated working environment in an obsolete shop, with obvious organizational problems and supervisors who didn't really seem to understand what was going on."

Louise Roy was deeply shaken by her visit to the repair shop, and was determined that something had to be done to improve an outdated working structure that did nobody any favours. As a committed leader, she began to observe, listen and communicate.

During her three-month introduction to the organization, she spent a lot of time, day and night, travelling by bus and by metro, visiting garages, workshops and factories, and inspecting tunnels. She listened to what people had to say, and tried to take it all in. The list of frustrations was long: supervision problems, lack of communication, outdated facilities, lack of management, aggressive behaviour, and so on. Not surprisingly, she was "heckled and shouted at" on several occasions, but she never gave in to the bullying, building "her trade mark and credibility with the workforce".

A HIGH-PROFILE ARRIVAL AT THE HEAD OF THE STCUM

Those first few months were fairly difficult, because in addition to the employees' frustration, she also had to deal with complaints from several users' groups. For example, representatives of Montreal's Black community reported racist remarks by some bus drivers, and seniors' representatives complained of unreliable schedules and poor customer service. She met with everyone and listened carefully to what they had to say. She felt as though she was in the midst of a general disaster where nothing was working as it should.

There was another unpleasant surprise too: the organization was divided into two halves. On one side were the corporate services – customer service, marketing, finance, communications and human resources – all of which reported to the president (i.e., her), and on the other hand was the General Operations Manager, who was in charge of operations and maintenance. It was he who "kept the ship afloat, managing 90% of the activities".

The organization was so centralized[5] that Louise Roy had no influence over either her product or what was done operationally. She let go some of the management team, including the Operations Manager, and recruited people who shared her values and philosophy. Michel Ste-Marie, a labour relations specialist, became her Human Resources Manager.

In the end she was able to change the way power was delegated by dividing the organization into units or centres of responsibility, with a focus on customer service. She had this to say about the changes she made:

> "We could never have changed our employees' relations with customers without changing our employee management methods. We couldn't ask them to be polite to customers if nobody in the organization would listen to them. I felt it was important to renew our human resources management and general management before presenting any kind of customer service improvement plan. Otherwise, we'd have been completely inconsistent. We'd have told our customers that things were changing, but in fact nothing at all would have changed because management had done nothing to change the organizational culture."

EMPLOYEE ACCOUNTABILITY

In the old structure, the surface network (buses, compounds, garages and employees) and the underground network (trains, tunnels and employees) were grouped together to form a single entity. By creating two separate branches, Louise Roy wanted not only to simplify the hierarchical structure by reducing the number of levels from nine to four, but also to make all the employees accountable, in order to avoid embarrassing situations[6]. This is how she described the new garage structure:

> "We set up a surface branch and assigned one boss for every seven or eight garages. Maintenance and operations were under the authority of a single boss, whose mission was service, punctuality, maintenance with performance contracts, and customer service. The surface branch gave support to all the compounds in terms of customer service training. The major activity – maintenance – became a support function for operations and customer service."

A DYNAMIC DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY AND THE CREATION OF SMALL SEMI-INDEPENDENT UNITS

One day, Louise Roy received a telephone call from a bus driver, who wanted someone to help him solve a problem. He said: "I'm calling you because you're my boss!" As she took his call, she realized that none of the 4,000 bus drivers had an immediate superior to whom they were accountable, and she immediately

launched a restructuring initiative, creating the position of "Operations Chief" to replace that of Inspector[7]. This was a brand-new concept designed to appoint a superior for the 4,000 bus drivers.

Again, this was more than a change of name; it was a major organizational change as well. The Operations Chief, an inspector with the type of profile suited to managing small teams, became the head of small groups of bus drivers. He was responsible for managing absenteeism, punctuality and customer relations. The change sent out another important signal, namely that if a problem arose, the Operations Chief was the boss, not the union or the president, as had been the case until then.

Louise Roy also decentralized the underground network in a similar way, refocusing management of the metro on customer service. Line managers became solely responsible for their metro line and its stations. Maintenance fell under the authority of the customer service department, and the maintenance employees were asked to sign performance contracts.

The new structure gradually took shape through a series of internal meetings, thanks to the President's listening skills. The organization was now led by someone who had embraced all the responsibilities of the position: committees met and decisions were made and then implemented. All this emerged gradually, starting in 1987. However, it was not until 1989 that all the elements were in place and the organization began to function more normally. "There were some very good people at every level," says Louise Roy. "I tried to see which of them shared my management values and philosophy – transparency, listening to customers, and effective management with due respect for the people concerned." During the meetings, around fifty agents of change were identified, and these people were gradually appointed to head fifty key operational (e.g. the compounds) and corporate (e.g. the support service) units. Thanks to these "champions", she was also able to develop people capable of taking over senior management positions.

Throughout all these years, strikes and negotiations were also part of her everyday life. Even in the toughest negotiations, she was able to remain calm in the face of maintenance employees who could be rough at times, and who "didn't always say it with flowers"[8].

A BOARD OF DIRECTORS WITH A RENEWED ROLE TO PLAY

The new board of directors, composed of twelve local councillors, two citizens' representatives, the MUC president and the board president, reflected the essence of the law. As well as managing internal dynamics, Louise Roy also had to manage relations with local elected representatives, generally municipal councillors and mayors. The first board of directors was instituted in 1985. The Mayor of Montréal-Nord, Yves Ryan, was elected to the highly political position of chair, but the municipal elections of 1986, won by the RCM[9], quickly changed everything.
Louise Roy's relationship with the directors, with whom she dealt virtually every day, forced her to do a lot of educating, since she soon realized they knew very little about the organization. Public dynamics became a significant element in her life. She also noted that, as the municipalities served by the networks also became the major funding providers, they began to make all kinds of additional demands.

At the same time, political interventions and pressure from Québec City, the MUC and the City of Montreal became increasingly strong. The Québec Government was a major player in terms of infrastructures and capital funding. However, Louise Roy usually dealt with civil servants from the provincial transport ministry.

Legally, the STCUM had to hold one public board meeting per month. However, the board members adopted the habit of holding a meeting in private, before the two-hour public session, so that it had time to debate all the issues. The public session took place from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. There were, of course, the

traditional complaints about lack of punctuality and employee behaviour, but there were also some interesting remarks and suggestions[10].

Louise Roy, while maintaining her presence in the organization, was also involved with the general public and elected representatives. As she remarked, "the pressure and dynamics" were sometimes difficult to manage.

CHANGING THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF A LARGE-SCALE ORGANIZATION: A FIST OF IRON AND GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Restructuring[11] is synonymous with a change of culture. As Louise Roy points out: "In the public sector, with an organization of several thousand employees, you simply can't implement a new organizational culture, with all the attendant restructuring, staff training and new teams at every level, in less than five years."

As she began to set up the responsibility centres and appoint her staff, she raised a lot of questions. Who was the most valuable: the customer service people, the operations people or the corporate services people? And how did the ranking affect pay? Was it really possible to introduce a culture of punctuality? In the latter case, the answer was "yes", but it took a lot of tact and perseverance. This is how she describes what was done:

> "We couldn't post timetables at bus stops until we'd changed the organization sufficiently. Underlying the promise of punctuality was a whole series of factors, including the primary value of punctuality. And underlying that punctuality was a commitment made not only by the bus driver, but also by the hierarchy of which he was a part. We also had to negotiate with the City, so it would notify us of any road works along bus routes and we could make changes where necessary. We had to negotiate very hard, because in the past the bus drivers had tried to gain minutes in the first part of their route, and put their foot down in the last part, to give themselves a longer turnaround time and longer breaks …
>
> When we announced that we'd be punctual, this kind of behaviour was no longer possible. The normal speed had to be averaged out, so that the bus arrived at each stop on time. We also had to introduce a form of supervision that rewarded punctual lines. Obviously, delays were understandable if there was a major problem with traffic. The employees had to be equipped so they could warn the control centre if they were going to be late. We introduced software that allowed people to dial a telephone number for information on when the next bus would come. All these technological upgrades strengthened the service even after I was no longer there. If you don't have the infrastructure to back up your promises, you're better not to make them in the first place."

A PLACE FOR WOMEN AND THEIR SKILLS

Louise Roy was convinced that women could play a more important role within the STCUM, and explains how she went about giving them more responsibility in the field:

> "We designed our early affirmative action plans for women and visible minorities. My time at the STCUM was characterized by managerial innovations and restructuring, including the appointment of the first female garage managers heading up a group of 500 employees - 300 bus drivers and 200 maintenance workers. It was quite a task! These women were very well liked, even at the Mont-Royal garage, where things were toughest. A woman who I appointed led the entire surface network of 4,000 bus drivers for five years. It's not a prestigious job, and people don't know about it, but it's a tough one!

> At conferences, I recommended that managers should get women out of corporate services and into operations, because they were successful there. Generally speaking, women aren't political enough, but they're very task-oriented and do what they have to do well. They have good listening skills and tend to deal with conflicts rather than leaving them to fester. They don't provoke. They're reliable and responsible."

Two initiatives in particular were taken: first, women were appointed as supervisors in garages, and second, more women became bus drivers. The results were immediately obvious: more civilized behaviour, better grooming and less swearing than among their male counterparts.

Louise Roy describes this period of intense change as follows:

> "The fact of decentralizing the organization into business units, making the base accountable and bringing them closer to the decision-making process, was key in changing the organizational culture. It enabled new managers to emerge and be developed, through the new units. Also, the arrival of women in an organization that had not traditionally been open to them proved to be a very important factor. Other significant elements were the restoration of a good working climate and a new relationship of trust between the unions and ourselves. Once the reforms had been completed, we launched our first television advertising campaigns – there hadn't been any before – to promote the value of urban transit. Our slogan was: *Public transit, an intelligent choice!* We called on people's intelligence and their sense of environment."

Louise Roy was physically and mentally exhausted by now, having worked flat-out for up to 80 hours a week over a period of more than five years, and she did not want a third term of office when her second term expired in December 1991. However, she did agree to stay a little longer, to oversee the transition, because although the new culture was more or less installed, it was still fragile. Louise Roy felt she had fulfilled most of her mission at the STCUM and believed it was time for her to move on.

A BRAND IMAGE THAT WOULD REMAIN

In the 1980s, Louise Roy, a young 37-year-old sociologist with virtually no managerial experience, managed to turn around one of Québec's largest public agencies, and one that was in the sorriest state. She was able to instil life, energy and dynamism into what had become a moribund organization. Her efforts were widely discussed in the media, and Louise Roy acquired an image as a kind of "mythical heroine" in the organizational transformation sector. It was an image that would remain in the collective memory, and would become her "trade mark", in the same way that the television program *Point de mire* was associated with René Lévesque as the element that first brought him into the public eye and revealed the "real" René Lévesque to the general public.

ENDNOTES

[1] Most of the information used to write this case study was gathered in three interviews conducted with Louise Roy by the authors on May 31, June 18 and September 28, 2007. Altogether, the interviews lasted approximately eight hours, and were transcribed verbatim in text form (77 pages). Translated by Benjamin Waterhouse from French, case A (# 9 40 2010 017) was entitled "Louise Roy : leader engagée et intrapreneure de la transformation d'organisations".

The case study continues on from a number of other texts about Louise Roy. See in particular the case study (in French only) by Rachel Mayer and Gérard Ouimet, entitled *Louise Roy : La passion du transport,* filed with HEC Montréal's Case Study Centre in 1991 (9 pages), which won the Alma Lepage award that same year. The case study presented here focuses on aspects of change management and innovation in organizations, a process commonly known as "innovation management" when performed by intrapreneurs.

[2] See the appendix A.

[3] When she was first appointed, very few people knew of her experience in the transit field. From 1976 to 1985, she had been Planning Manager for the Québec government's land use planning agency, the Office de planification et de développement du Québec (OPDQ), and for Québec's transportation ministry (MTQ). During that period, the OPDQ had been asked to study the transit situation in the Greater Montreal region, jointly with the MTQ. Louise Roy, a sociologist, was appointed Research Project Manager for urban transit by the Québec Government. During the transit study, she led a team of up to 50 people from a variety of disciplines and professions, including engineers, urban planners and economists. The team produced a large number of structural studies and impact assessments. By 1985, Louise Roy was probably one of the leading urban transit experts in Québec, Canada and even the world.

[4] The Urban Community's elected representatives and managers were "sick of paying and not having a say" in how things were run.

[5] All expenses of more than $100 automatically came to her for signature and approval, even though the transactions had already been approved by several other people at different administrative levels.

[6] Before the restructuring, the bus drivers and maintenance employees worked under different superintendents. The drivers were part of the operations department, while the maintenance employees were part of the maintenance department. Although they worked under the same roof, they did not speak to one another, and if a bus was not available, nobody thought it was important because nobody considered themselves responsible.

[7] The inspector reported information but had no power to correct things that did not work.

[8] A group of 40 or so maintenance employees came to a meeting of the board of directors, wearing a t-shirt depicting Louise Roy as a little girl with her hair in bunches, with the logo "Lulu negotiates!" Her reaction: "I hope you brought one for me!" They had, and she wore the t-shirt throughout the negotiations.

[9] The RCM, or Rassemblement des citoyens et des citoyennes de Montréal (RCM), was set up in May 1974 by a group of citizens dissatisfied with Mayor Jean Drapeau. Its goal was to represent all Montrealers.

[10] At one of the public sessions, *Action travail des femmes*, a women's organization, pointed out that one of the hiring criteria – a commercial driver's licence – discriminated against women, who normally had regular licences. This situation was subsequently corrected, thereby allowing women to become bus drivers.

[11] 1985-1987: information gathering and structure design;
1987-1989: implementation of the new structure.

APPENDIX A
Passenger Transit
Background and Key Dates*

May 18,1861	Creation of the *Montreal City Passenger Railway Company* (horse-drawn cars).
1886	The company became the *Montreal Street Railway Compan*y.
1892	First electric tramway.
October 1894	The horse-drawn cars were permanently retired.
1901	The *Montreal Street Railway* purchased the *Park and Island Railway Company*.
March 24, 1911	Incorporation of the *Montreal Tramways Company*.
October 1, 1911	Beginning of the activities of the *Montreal Tramways Company* (MTC).
October 1911	The MTC bought and merged the *Montreal Terminal Railway Company* on October 2, the *Montreal Terminal Railway Company* on October 5, the *Suburban Tramway and Power Company* on October 9 and the *Montreal Park and Island Railway Company* on October 23.
1919	The first two buses were brought into service.
1937	The first modern trolley bus service in Canada.
1950	A provincial Act of Parliament set up the *Montreal Transportation Commission*.
June 16, 1951	Beginning of the *Montreal Transportation Commission*'s operations. It had two major goals: to establish a rapid transit system and to replace the trams as quickly as possible with buses and trolley buses.
1959-1966	Gradual elimination of the trams and trolley buses.
October 14, 1966	Inauguration of the Montreal metro system.
1970	The Montreal Transportation Commission became the Montreal Urban Community Transportation Commission (known by its French acronym CTCUM).
1974	Lawrence Hanigan was appointed as the Commission's President and CEO. The organization's new colours were adopted (white, blue and aluminum).
1980-1984	Metro line extensions and incorporation of the suburban train lines.
1985	The CTCUM became the Montreal Urban Community Transportation Board (known by its French acronym STCUM). Louise Roy was appointed as its President and CEO on March 20.
1986-1988	Metro line extensions.
November 2, 1992	Trefflé Lacombe became CEO of the STCUM.

* For further information, see:
http://www.stcum.qc.ca/english/en-bref/a-dates.htm
http://site.rdaq.qc.ca/cgi-bin/templates/body/Frontend/pageSuppMS.cfm?psID=153&NM=168
http://www.stm.info/en-bref/ancetre2.htm
http://www.stm.info/en-bref/ancetre6.htm

Louise Roy: Intrapreneurship Through Organizational Change[1]

Case B
1992-2003

Summary

Case B describes her management experience implementing structural changes at Air France Americas Division first and later at IATA's more traditional North American environment.

CHRISTIAN BLANC, AIR FRANCE, PARIS, THE AMERICAS AND IATA[2]

BUT FIRST … A BRIEF INCURSION INTO THE PRIVATE SECTOR WITH THE LAURENTIAN GROUP

Louise Roy was recruited by a head-hunter and went to work for the Laurentian Group in July 1992. As the Group's Principal Vice-President in Montreal, she was responsible for the secretariat, public affairs and human resources. In fact, her task was to set up a more consistent human resource management strategy for the Group's three independent subsidiaries – general insurance, life insurance and banking – each of which had its own human resources vice-president and its own personnel.

The experience she hoped to acquire by working in the private sector was cut short six months later, when the Group was taken over by Desjardins[3]. As a result, her human resource management strategy was reduced to a strategic consultation between the units, and at the same time she had to manage a growing media crisis. She has this to say about her time with the Laurentian Group:

> "I can't say I made a substantial contribution to the organization while I was there. These first steps into the private sector gave me a glimpse of an environment with which I wasn't familiar, and brought me into contact with some exceptional people whom I wouldn't have met otherwise, including Henri-Paul Rousseau and Claude Forget ... I had to work with real boards of directors and human resources committees, neither of which I'd come across in the public sector."

When Desjardins effectively took over control of the Group's operations in December 1993, Louise Roy found herself without a job[4].

AND THEN … OFF TO DE GASPÉ BEAUBIEN

Télémédia President Philippe de Gaspé Beaubien[5] himself contacted Louise Roy and asked her to head the company's activities in Québec (radio stations, magazines and regional weeklies). She was not familiar with these three sectors, but they piqued her interest. When she first started with the organization in March 1994, the weekly publication division had just been put up for sale.

She had just begun to adjust to her new role when she received a call that sent her into a spin. Christian Blanc[6], who had recently been appointed to the top position at Air France with the mandate of transforming the organization and making it profitable, offered her the directorship of the "Americas Division"[7], which came with a colossal amount of responsibility and was based in Paris. Christian Blanc knew her well; they had met when they were each managing their city's urban transit board, she in Montreal and he in Paris.

Philippe and Nan-B de Gaspé Beaubien reacted with a great deal of class, making her an offer she could not refuse. “If we were your age, we’d accept an opportunity like that. We’ll let you go to France, but in return, we’d like you to maintain your attachment to our family and our business by sitting on the board of directors. You never know, we might need you in the future!”

Throughout her time with Air France, from April 1994 to late summer 1997, Louise Roy did not miss a single Télémédia board meeting.

AIR FRANCE: SURPRISE AND ASTONISHMENT

In 1993, Air France a state-owned corporation, was losing a lot of money; in fact, it was technically bankrupt. To avoid a catastrophe, the French government was authorized by the European Union to inject several billion francs, for the last time, “in exchange for a performance contract under which Air France had to achieve a balanced budget within three years”.

The French government was not the only one to resort to this type of intervention; all the European airlines, at some point in their existence, received government support. However, for the sake of fair competition, the European Union leaders told the airlines that state subsidies would no longer be available in the future. In late 1993, French Prime Minister Édouard Balladur appointed Christian Blanc to lead Air France. Although Blanc was not familiar with the air transportation sector, he was known as an “outstanding negotiator” and was asked to settle the problem of runway occupation and restore the organization’s financial base.

“LIVE OR DIE” – CHRISTIAN BLANC'S CATCH PHRASE!

To drag the firm out of its financial depression, Christian Blanc prepared a very detailed recovery plan with a series of actions, backed by figures, to reduce expenses, including the possibility of eliminating the First Class service, which epitomized French luxury. He went over the heads of the unions, submitting his recovery plan directly to the firm’s 35,000 employees, who held a secret vote on the fundamental question of the firm’s survival. The plan was accepted by 80% of them.

Fortified by this outcome, Christian Blanc then went to the unions to ask for help in applying his plan. “I don’t know of any other leader of a unionized firm who would go over everyone’s head like that,” says Louise Roy, commenting on what she qualifies as a “courageous” gesture. In the wake of the vote, Christian Blanc surveyed the employees’ opinions, and two responses emerged as being dominant: first, communications were deficient, and second, there were many frustrations. Louise Roy describes the situation when she first arrived at Air France:

> “Christian Blanc wanted to break the old organizational structure, which he felt was eclectic enough to trigger a new form of dynamic. In the State culture, Air France was the Grand Old Lady. The workforce had a mentality that bordered on arrogance. Flight crews didn’t have good relationships with their clients. Although the firm was losing money, they didn’t care: the State would provide. There was absolutely no competitive service culture, and no desire at all to reduce costs …”

Christian Blanc took a big risk when he called in three foreigners – one American, one Swede and one Quebecer, none of whom knew anything about air transportation. However, he was convinced their managerial skills and innovative viewpoints would help him trigger the changes he needed to revitalize the dying organization.

What, then, could his team of foreigners do to help transform the "Grand Old Lady"? Air France had two huge administrative units: sales and ground personnel, and operations and air personnel. Christian Blanc wanted to break this model by decentralizing the organization. His vision was to create a new structure with five centres of responsibility based on the territories covered: Asia, Europe, Africa, Americas, and Indian Ocean/overseas territories.

MANAGING THE "GRAND OLD LADY" VIA PROFIT CENTRES

As is usually the case in profit centres, the managers were asked to manage operational activities (pilots, cabin crew, etc.), commercial market activities including expatriates in all cities within the territories served, and aircraft maintenance. "In fact, he handed over a small airline to each one of us! Our mission letter, in French jargon, involved revitalizing the company's accounts and making the organizational culture more entrepreneurial," says Louise Roy.

Christian Blanc appointed internal candidates to manage the Europe, Asia/Caribbean and Indian Ocean centres. However, Louise Roy quickly realized that the Africa manager, like Christian Blanc, was not familiar with the airline sector, that the Swede in charge of cargo (formerly responsible for Cargo Lux in Luxembourg) barely spoke French, and that the American, a Muslim Indian hired to implement the new management system at Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris, did not speak a word of French. And there were other surprises in store too. This is how she describes her first few weeks with Air France:

> "Of the three newcomers, I was theoretically the most familiar with the French culture. You think you know how French organizations work, but in reality it brought home to me just how North American I really was! Air France is probably a caricature of the very best and the very worst France has to offer in terms of an ultra-political organizational culture with a civil service attitude that's respectful of hierarchies, but where managers simply don't take initiatives and behave arrogantly towards their staff. When I saw how an organization such as this was run, it really shook my values."

The team's task was to change the enterprise culture, improve its results, reduce expenditures and increase revenues. However, to do this it was also necessary to change how the organization worked, by introducing new cost and revenue management methods and managing lines and products (first class, new seats and new services) more effectively.

DECENTRALIZATION – CHRISTIAN BLANC'S "MISSION IMPOSSIBLE"

Christian Blanc, knowing nothing of the airline transit sector, called on an American, a former president of a large American airline, for help. The American, as Christian Blanc's strategic advisor, said it was not possible to divide Air France's management into five geographical areas because airlines simply did not function that way. He need not have bothered saying this – the reorganization was already underway.

Louise Roy, in charge of the Americas sector, had to cut costs, make every line profitable and review the contract management process. When she examined her markets, she quickly saw that some South American lines, including the historic Paris-Lima and Paris-Quito routes, were not profitable. And so she closed them down and dealt personally with the layoffs because "managing things properly was very important to me". She wanted "everyone to feel they had been respected and treated well".

She was not really surprised when a small group of women from the Quito sales office asked to meet with her and submit a proposal: they wanted to charter an aircraft that would guarantee Air France 30 passengers per week between Quito and Bogota, to fuel the Bogota-Paris route. "I thought it was fantastic that they'd taken charge of their own destiny, and I had to find an aircraft for them". And she did! Soon, "an entire service in the Indian portion of South America" was set up to feed the Bogota-Paris line. When

a line was profitable – in Argentina, for example – she increased the number of flights, and she also created direct lines, for example to Chile.

The North American lines were not forgotten either. Louise Roy improved her product, among other things by coordinating the Concorde return flights on the Paris-New York line. By making the flights leave New York earlier in the morning, it was easier for passengers to catch their European connections in the early evening. For wealthy passengers who were not necessarily businesspeople, but who liked to travel by Concorde, she developed new products (e.g. theme-based round-the-world trips), but she had to fight the organization in order to gain acceptance for activities that were financially lucrative (e.g. Pepsi Blue). This is how she describes the European Blue Concorde product:

> "The Pepsi Cola people came to see us to launch their new Pepsi Blue product from London, for all the European markets. The launch was a spectacular affair, with Concorde trips for their customers. The commercial risk of this venture was much greater than I thought, because I didn't know aircraft were painted white to reflect light, which enabled them to fly at higher altitudes. Working with a team of engineers, we managed to convince the Pepsi Cola people to pay to have the aircraft painted blue, and then repainted white. So the paint job didn't cost us a cent ... The idea of a prestigious brand association like this was completely crazy, but my internal team was very open to the risk and they found I was willing to listen to them."

For the Americas Sector to be profitable, the lines themselves had to be profitable, and costs had to be controlled. Louise Roy, in attacking the little packs of butter, glasses of champagne and free magazines, also attacked the Air France brand. The arguments put forward[8] encouraged her to look elsewhere for the cost-cutting exercise. "When you come in from the outside, you have a lot of preconceived ideas. I had to let go of two of mine very quickly!" In the end, only the little packs of butter were removed, and of course the adjustment had to be such that it did not compromise customer satisfaction.

She also had to manage the operational decentralization process. In real terms, this affected aircraft optimization (the more an aircraft flies, the more profitable it is), flight staff rotation (alternating between medium-haul and long-haul flights) and hotel contract management. When aircraft and flight personnel were attached to specific territories, a number of problems surfaced. Louise Roy describes the atmosphere in the Americas Sector in the following terms:

> "The pilots were attached to the aircraft and were trained to work in either Airbuses or Boeings – so they weren't able to transfer from one type of aircraft to the other. And cabin crew who'd worked for the company for several years liked to fly to America, but also to the Caribbean, Japan and so on. They didn't want to be limited. The flight staff on short rotations – Paris-New York, Paris-Chicago and so on – soon became exhausted because they arrived, slept and left again the following day. On a longer Asian rotation, they could sleep on board and weren't required to come back right away. So it was less tiring. When the changes were made, the personnel quickly became irritated. They went on strike to drive home the fact that they didn't want to be confined to a specific territory."

REDUCING FLIGHT CREW ACCOMODATION COSTS – AND ALSO CLIENT COSTS

As part of the extensive restructuring process, Louise Roy had to rethink the sector's activities and reduce its operating costs, including client and crew accommodation costs, both of which are major expenses for airlines. However, when she began to attack hotel contract management, she had no idea of what awaited her. Here is how she describes her experience:

"An airline like ours sends crews throughout the world, and the cost of accommodating both clients and crew is very high. Entire hotel floors are booked by airlines. We decided to attack the hotel contracts. In New York, the cabin crew wanted to stay at the Central Park Hotel – imagine that. To save money and avoid shuttles, I wanted to negotiate accommodation for pilots and cabin crew in airport hotels.
Well – I hit a road block! The pilots started working to rule to protest against the reduction in their living conditions. In spite of their protests, I decided to go into the field. I went to visit hotels in New York, along with the president of the cabin crew union. I wanted to see the hotels used by the other major airlines.

One hotel in particular was well-known in the field. It had been used for several years by another European airline, and also by American pilots. Two charming little air hostesses and I went to visit the hotel's air crew lounge. An American pilot was there, drinking beer and watching sport on the television with his feet up on the table. When he saw the two Air France hostesses, he waved at them and said, "Welcome, come in folks!" The two women told me they'd never set foot in there – it wasn't up to their standards.

The field visit helped me to understand this aspect of the organization's culture. In the end, I came round to their point of view. I was pretty familiar with the entire labour relations thing."

CREDIBILITY AND LEGITIMACY AMONG THE STAFF

Louise Roy wanted to understand what the company's flight crew actually did. Given that they worked on an aircraft, and not in an office, this meant flying day and night with pilots in the cockpit and cabin crew in the galley. She found the flight crew did not know what was going on in the company, and were not familiar with management. So, having convinced her somewhat doubtful commercial manager and human resources manager, she decided to set up monthly morning coffee hour meetings for flight crew at Roissy.

Louise Roy's meetings, at which she took time to explain the company's commercial and strategic challenges, income and expenditure, recovery efforts and significant human resources elements, even attracted the union! The initiative, which was extremely unusual in France, also brought her closer to the flight crews. The complaints triggered by the decentralization process did not stop altogether, but at least the flight personnel got to know one another and the company for which they worked.

Keen to find other ways of developing a closer relationship with the flight personnel, she decided to use their locker room at Charles de Gaulle Airport. The union used it to distribute its own communications, and she decided to do the same, not only for newsletters, but also as a place to greet the personnel when they arrived in the morning. She encouraged her team to do the same:

> "Everyone in my team had to do the same thing. They were instructed to go on board the aircraft, in the cockpits and galleys, and to attend the coffee hours, as a means of creating a simple way of communicating what the company was doing. I was able to impose some of my style, by going out to meet the personnel that management never usually sees. It helped me a lot ... Eventually, when there was the threat of a general strike in all Air France's divisions to protest the new structure, we in the Americas division were able to communicate extensively with our employees to explain our positions, and in the end they didn't join the strike. I'm not saying there were never strikes, but relatively speaking fewer people joined them because we had a good relationship with our employees ... The Americas division's activities improved significantly because of all these efforts."

NEW INITIATIVES AND A MORE PROFESSIONAL APPROACH FOR THE PERSONNEL

As she improved her relationship with the personnel by communicating and listening, Louise Roy was able to introduce a number of initiatives designed to avoid service breakdowns between flight personnel and ground personnel. For example, to ensure the fluidity of flights to New York and Los Angeles, she organized meetings between the flight crews and ground crews responsible for welcoming and registering passengers. Until then, the two groups had functioned in completely separate worlds.

However, meetings alone were not enough to solve all the problems – training was also required. Air France's management school sent out a clear signal: the days of "who you know" were over[9], and it was time to become more professional. When Louise Roy eventually became head of the Global Marketing and Quality Division[10], she worked hard on the organization's philosophies, management values and service values to create the new Air France brand image. She describes her contribution as follows:

> "Air France couldn't do everything it wanted without involving its ground personnel, who were spread across 60 or so countries with different customer relations cultures. We created 100 service rules, starting with the first contact in an Air France sales agency, and covering airport employees, flight personnel and arrival personnel. In the end, people were calling them *lourules*. We wanted customers to be treated in a fairly standard way throughout the world, with a focus on quality. Telephone reservation methods and airport registration methods in Chicago weren't the same as in Dakar, where the personnel were less restrained. We wanted to try to give managers a framework to which they could refer when evaluating their employees."

DOWN-TO-EARTH CONSIDERATIONS

When Louise Roy accepted Christian Blanc's offer, she knew she would not be emigrating – she was simply "going on an adventure". It was also clear in her mind that she would not be abandoning her friends or her Québec roots. As an only child, she took advantage of her extensive travels as manager of the Americas Sector to visit her mother, and admits that the fact of not having children allowed her to avoid a lot of the expatriate's normal worries, including those relating to education.

What does she remember the most about her three years with Air France? Other than the service rules that she designed and introduced, and the restructuring that followed the Air-Inter merger, she was also involved in creating a set of references for Air France service. However, there is one specific time, shortly after her arrival, that she says she will always remember. It was a call that she received one Sunday evening, around 6 p.m., from the President's secretary, asking her to go to his office in the Montparnasse neighbourhood of Paris.

> "When Christian Blanc first came to Air France, he wanted to achieve some significant productivity gains by reducing the cost of the organization's pilots. This was my first encounter with France's labour relations culture, which is very different from ours. There were twelve people present, four senior managers and eight representatives from the pilots' union. They were very sophisticated people.

There was a table loaded down with smoked salmon, wine and a wonderful buffet. It was quite a change from the pizzas I'd been eating for the past several years! We sat on sofas and spent all night, from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m., talking, eating, drinking champagne and wine, and so on. And they smoked! The French smoke a lot! I tried to understand what was going on, because there was clearly a lot of business being done implicitly, including the fact of being received so elegantly in the boss's office.

The message was very nicely wrapped: "I'm the President and I want things to work out. You're my associates and peers, and I'm treating you as such. You're stakeholders in the success and you're going to help me to find solutions. Work with me, and your value will be recognized!" The pilots agreed to a salary reduction and to give free flight hours to the company! The experience really opened my eyes to the culture there. I realized that I was in quite another environment altogether. In France, negotiations are primarily political."

The Air France adventure ended in August 1997, in the same way that it had started three years earlier. The de Gaspé Beaubien family was looking for someone to take over, and asked her to join them because they felt she was "the only person the children would accept". In her role as President and CEO, she could facilitate the transition from the parents to their three children at the head of the Télémédia Group.

When the offer was made, Louise Roy was travelling less and was beginning to enjoy the Parisian lifestyle. Not only that, but she enjoyed her job. She did not know what to do, and went to see Christian Blanc, who had a surprise in store for her: the French government had refused to privatize Air France, and Blanc had decided to resign. Any doubts she had about her future were gone in an instant, and she returned to Montreal.

LOOKING BACK

Christian Blanc's plan was never fully implemented and left an impression in the media and in the public opinion of a partial, if not outright failure. Certainly, the overall extensive reform that he had developed and hoped to implement was never introduced. He designed a revolution, but achieved a series of small reforms scattered through the complex system of what was a huge corporation. In real terms, thanks to his willingness to rattle the cage, and the many elements that remained in place after his departure, Air France went on to become better adjusted to its customers and markets, not to mention better managed and much more effective.

Some of the more positive outcomes from the reform included the innovations and transformations introduced into the Americas division by Louise Roy. The extensive technical and managerial changes that she was able to implement in the division affected both the flight staff (pilots and cabin crew) and ground staff (receptionists, baggage handlers and mechanics). Thanks to her hard work, the division became a model for the rest of Air France.

PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION AT TÉLÉMÉDIA

In August 1997, Louise Roy went home to Montreal, and to be fair to her former employer, went back to Télémédia. As President and CEO, her task was to "oversee the transfer of ownership" from the parents to their three children.
When she took up her new position, it quickly became clear that the firm she had left three years earlier had barely moved in her absence. To facilitate the transition between the generations, she decided to privatize the firm and buy back the shares that had been issued. In line with the family's wishes, she also developed a growth strategy for the radio sector. Thanks to a series of acquisitions throughout Canada, the Group's portfolio soon grew to include 70 radio stations.

As far as the highly-competitive publications sector was concerned, the situation worsened in 1998, when the rules governing cold-call selling of advertising were changed. Before then, Canadian magazines were protected to some extent from their American competitors, who were not allowed to canvas for publicity in Canada (except for Time Magazine, which had a grandfathered right).

Once the protective clause had been removed, Canadian magazines, particularly the English language publications that were one of Télémédia's driving forces, lost some of their advertising base to the large American magazines. It became necessary for the Group to sell its publications division, and in the end all its publications were bought by Groupe Transcontinental.

The children also decided to sell the radio stations. To do this, the stations were divided into three blocks: French language radio, English language radio and Western Canadian radio. In line with the family's wishes, and in the space of three years, all Télémédia's assets were sold and the de Gaspé Beaubien children each went on to work in different business sectors.

What was Louise Roy's contribution during these three years? "Ultimately I didn't introduce any innovations. I facilitated the transition, but the children made all the main strategic decisions themselves."

IATA (THE INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION)

IATA and ICAO (the International Civil Aviation Organization) both oversee air transportation. ICAO, a United Nations policy organization composed of governments and countries, is responsible for world civil aviation regulations[11]. IATA, for its part, represents the air transportation industry, and has a dual head office in Geneva (Switzerland) and Montreal (Canada). It is funded by contributions from its members: roughly 230 airlines, accounting for nearly 93% of regular international air transportation. It also sells services to its members[12]. IATA is responsible for applying world regulations and ensures that they are harmonized among its member companies.

In 1997, Pierre Jeanniot[13], IATA's General Manager, decided to turn Montreal into a high-level centre. He began by transferring the Security division, and in 2000 created a new position of Vice-President, Commercial Activities. It was around this time that Louise Roy met him and agreed to join the Montreal management team.

She was given the dual task of selling more services to the member airlines and creating an e-trade strategy. By selling more services, she increased "the share of income up to a certain level of autonomy", freezing the members' subscriptions as a result. In buying services, the airlines continued to fill IATA's coffers, but in a different way, by purchasing training and publications.

IATA's training school trained most of the airlines' executives at two main sites, in Geneva and Montreal. It also had a Miami site, serving Latin America, and a Beijing site, where Chinese airline staff was trained. In addition, a joint MBA program had been set up in collaboration with Civil Aviation of China, when 15 or so Chinese airlines merged to form three large companies with international partnerships. Among its many other activities, the training school offered seminars (marketing techniques, legal services, etc.) and helped travel agencies to obtain IATA certification.
The more technical publications, including directives for the transportation of hazardous materials, came from the largest publishing centre, located in Amsterdam.

To be effective, both the publications and the training were fed by a research centre. The largest research centre, with 80 employees, was located in London, and was responsible for satisfaction surveys, customer perception surveys and world conferences. Louise Roy felt she was most innovative not in implementing her e-trade strategy, but in structuring the activities of the organization's divisions and people. Most of her innovations were managerial in nature. She has this to say about how she organized the commercial business and rearranged the existing methods:

> "In Montreal, I opened the Conference Office and recruited Air Canada's former Vice-President, Human Resources, to run my London Training Institute. I restructured the entire

> process in London, and created the position of Chief Economist, to be responsible for making forecasts for the airlines. I was based in Montreal, but I also had employees in London and Geneva."

What difference would a Chief Economist make? This is what she has to say:

> "I had two sectors in London: International Conferences and Research. I shadowed the managers for a while. The woman in charge of the Conference sector was a remarkable manager, a leader who had tremendous potential. The Research sector guy, although he had a brilliant, clear mind, wasn't a manager … I quickly found a solution by merging the two sectors and putting the woman in charge. I appointed the guy to the position of Chief Economist, with clear instructions to give him access to the research. The IATA Head, Jeanniot, was fully in agreement and often worked with the Chief Economist, even though the guy reported to me. The new structure functioned very well."

The Chief Economist, as IATA's spokesperson, rather like the chief economist of Desjardins or the National Bank, was involved in every subject area: economic forecasting, the global situation, oil, currency, South American companies. There was nothing he did not touch. Papers at world conferences and articles in the IATA newsletter – he addressed any subject that was likely to interest the airlines, including service strategies, positioning, procurement and so on. "He was delighted to be able to concentrate on his economic studies and leave the management task to someone else," says Louise Roy.

She left IATA in March 2003, somewhat abruptly. A few months previously, a new General Manager had been selected to lead IATA, and he brought in a new human resources manager. Louise Roy, having been used to "working in an atmosphere of trust", was no longer able to function properly as the environment began to deteriorate. "I was upset at leaving an organization and a team that I liked, but I felt I was too old for all that." She goes on:

> "I lost interest. I was very tired. My years with Air France had been extremely demanding because it was so important for me to succeed. My experience at Télémédia was completely different, but equally demanding. And I worked hard at IATA, in a job that required a lot of travel. So I decided to take a few months off, so I could step back and decide what I wanted to do in the future."

ENDNOTES

1 Most of the information used to write this case study was gathered in three interviews conducted with Louise Roy by the authors on May 31, June 18 and September 28, 2007. Altogether, the interviews lasted approximately eight hours, and were transcribed verbatim in text form (77 pages). Translated by Benjamin Waterhouse from French, case B (# 9 40 2010 018) was entitled "Louise Roy : leader engagée et intrapreneure de la transformation d'organisations".

2 IATA: International Air Transport Association.

3 President Jacques Drouin and board chairman Claude Castonguay were seeking a European partner to consolidate the Group's business.

4 The Laurentian Bank, led by Henri-Paul Rousseau, remained part of the Desjardins organization for some time.

5 See the book by Jacqueline Cardinal and Laurent Lapierre (2005) entitled *Noblesse oblige. L'histoire d'un couple en affaires. Philippe de Gaspé Beaubien et Nan-B de Gaspé Beaubien*, Montréal, Éditions Logiques.

6 Christian Blanc is one of France's most senior civil servants. In 1985, it was he who settled the conflict in New Caledonia, a French territory overseas in Oceania. From 1989 to 1992, he led the Régie autonome des transports parisiens (RATP), then moved to Air France from 1993 to 1997, and to Merrill Lynch France from

late 2000 to March 2002. From 2002 to 2007, he was the elected representative for Yvelines in the Greater Paris area. In 2008 he was Secretary of State for Capital Region Development, reporting to France's Minister of State and Minister of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Land Use Planning.

7 Louise Roy was appointed Director General for the Americas, a territorial unit including North America, Central America and South America.

8 Air France purchased champagne in large quantities and was able to negotiate a very good price, and it also obtained the magazines free of charge.

9 The daughters of ambassadors or well-known personalities could become air hostesses simply by asking.

10 It was two years before Christian Blanc undid the process and recentralized operations without losing face; in 1996, when Air France took over Air-Inter – the national domestic airline – he was able to reorganize the Grand Old Lady.

11 For further information on ICAO, see: http://www.icao.int/.

12 For further information on IATA, see: http://www.iata.org/whatwedo/index.htm.

13 Pierre Jeanniot joined Air Canada in 1955, and went on to hold several strategic positions with the company, including that of CEO from 1984 to 1990, when he retired.

Louise Roy: Intrapreneurship Through Organizational Change[1]

Case C
2003- present time

Summary

Case C (2003-present time) is the description of the CIRANO leadership Forum held once a month on various topics (management, innovation, expertise, mobility…), her appointment as Chancellor of the University of Montreal and some reflexions on her unusual career path.

NEED FOR FREEDOM

TOWARDS NEW CHALLENGES: TRANSFERRING KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE – CIRANO[2]

In 2003, during a trip to Paris, Louise Roy met the head of CIRANO, Jean-Marc Rousseau. CIRANO is an inter-university research centre that brings together roughly one hundred academics and researchers from different universities and subject areas, working in the area of organizational analysis and offering innovative ways of improving efficiency to companies in both the public and private sectors.

As part of their activities with CIRANO, several human resource vice-presidents from large corporations including Bombardier, Alcan and CGI had asked the Centre to set up a think tank on leadership issues. The Centre's researchers, most of whom were economists used to working with models, did not know how to go about this. Would Louise Roy be interested? She decided she would; the project was small enough to leave time for her to think about the future, while giving her an opportunity to share her managerial experience and know-how.

During the next year she organized one meeting per month, each attended by a dozen human resource vice-presidents. When setting up the meetings, she listened to the potential participants' concerns, then selected the themes to be discussed. Sometimes she would call in a specialist – a CEO, an expert, a director or a researcher – to address more specific aspects. For example, she often invited leadership specialist Laurent Lapierre and innovation specialist Réal Jacob from HEC Montreal.

The participants were enthusiastic[3] and the chemistry between them was good. As a result, the meetings continued over the years, and by 2009 Louise Roy was beginning her seventh season. Although the focus had changed slightly, with more emphasis on management, the subjects were just as urgent, and included new problems relating to staff recruitment and retention[4].

While the forum took very little of her time, it was nevertheless highly stimulating for Louise Roy, not least because of the wealth of human contact it provided. And although she had enjoyed managing teams, she was pleased with her new situation; "without a boss or co-workers", she now had "an extraordinary amount of freedom" that allowed her to give conferences on skills management or about her own experience, two subjects of great interest to her.

SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT AND VOLUNTEER WORK

In 2007, as chair of the Montreal Arts Council board of directors, Louise Roy spent nearly half her time organizing a Summit on Culture. In addition to her duties as board chair, she also became Chancellor of the Université de Montréal in October 2008. Both positions were unpaid.

Louise Roy, a most untypical sociologist, is also a woman with a cause who shares her experience by sitting on several boards of directors and taking part in various volunteer activities.

EPILOGUE

BUT WHO IS LOUISE ROY? WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HER MANAGERAIL THINKING? WHAT MAKES HER AN INTRAPRENEUR?

Louise Roy's career path has been quite exceptional, and she has been an outstanding leader in all the organizations for which she has worked. She personifies a culture handed down by one of her grandfathers, an important social leader who created the now-famous Roy & Rousseau clinic in Québec City. Very few Quebecers, and even fewer Québec women, have held such senior positions in European multinationals. Her basic education may be in sociology, but she also has an ability to commit and to make choices. She explains her unusual path, the importance of being true to herself, and her view of human relationships, as follows:

> "It's mostly because of my personality that I took risks, made the choices I did, and seized the opportunities that presented themselves. For today's young people, their basic education and the lives they will lead depend on the opportunities they encounter … The element that probably marked my performance the most, wherever I was, is my fundamental interest in people as individuals, change, and organizational culture … I've remained in contact with many of my co-workers over the years. They give me the impression that they liked me as a boss. I respected them and helped them to develop by trusting them and giving them new responsibilities. Working with people and developing their skills is the thing I've found most interesting during my career."

Whether at the STCUM, Air France or IATA, Louise Roy was involved in a variety of ways in the process of organizational change. More than any other aspect, however, it was her natural willingness to listen and let others speak that allowed her to forge the type of relationship in which anything is possible, even changing a deeply-rooted tradition[5].

Her status at CIRANO and her position as Chancellor of the Université de Montréal gradually brought her closer to the academic community, which she first encountered and enjoyed in the late 1970s, when she taught at the School of Architecture. Drawn back to teaching, she became involved in an executive training/mentoring program, in collaboration with Réal Jacob.

At a time when mobility had not yet become a lifestyle, Louise Roy was a pioneer, studying in the United States and then accepting a job in France. "Being able to work in international environments was considered a tremendous privilege," she says. With the development of technology, the Millennium generation has become highly mobile, not only in the physical sense of being able to go wherever the jobs are, but also in the psychological sense, by transforming mobility into a lifestyle. Louise Roy's generation spoke of social justice; the Millennium generation speaks of social responsibility for business. What a difference!

A MESSAGE FOR YOUNG INTRAPRENEURIAL WOMEN – AND A MESSAGE FOR MANAGERS

> "If we're going to inspire young women and show them that people can take initiatives and find new ways of doing things within organizations, I'm not sure to what extent we should be observing not so much methods, but people-oriented skills as well. In business life, I place a great deal of importance on how people develop, and on their people skills – in other words, how they enter into contact with others, their ability to develop, and their willingness to listen and anticipate."

In other words, young women must develop the skills they need to deal with a team without necessarily losing their own souls in the process. It is especially important for them to stay true to themselves, particularly if they have lived abroad and been exposed to different cultures and methods. Louise Roy summarizes her message as follows:

> "People who are able to adjust – in other words, to understand the organization – will also be respected if they're faithful to themselves in the way they do things. I suppose my message is that they need to be able to deal with and understand the organization, understand and develop the skill to read the environment, and remain authentic to their own personality. Women have often tended to copy the masculine behaviour that constitutes their point of reference in an organizational context. However, at a time when we're discovering the wealth of diversity, it's important for women to realize that they, too, have a point of view and a method to contribute."

According to Louise Roy, although skills and expertise are vital to good management, they are insufficient, alone to generate a climate conducive to innovation and the expression and management of talent within an organization. A climate such as this will emerge as a result of people-oriented skills that create a favourable environment; employees often leave organizations because they are unable to tolerate the unpleasant political climate.

PEOPLE-ORIENTED SKILLS RATHER THAN EXPERTISE

What types of people-oriented skills need to be developed and expressed?

> "Develop cultures based on respect, learn to listen, allow talent to emerge, and be comfortable despite constraints and pressure. It's not only up to the head of the organization. You need people in the organization who have the same values, so that the right skills can develop. It's not just a one-man show! One person can have an extraordinary impact on an organization. He or she can damage the climate. If a change is to be sustainable within the organization, you need people able to relay it."

Louise Roy readily admits that she dislikes conflict and enjoys harmony. And yet, during her career she had to manage and defuse conflicts – sometimes explicit conflicts, such as those at the STCUM in Montreal, and sometimes implicit conflicts, such as those at Air France in Paris. As an only child, was she prepared for situations such as this? She is convinced her parents gave her the tools she needed:

> "An only child doesn't have to negotiate the division of affection with brothers and sisters. He or she is less well-prepared to deal with differences and conflicts in team situations. To some extent I've had to learn these skills throughout my life. I've always been aware of my weakness, in that I didn't have to carve out a place for myself within the family. Luckily my parents were from large families, had strict rules for me, and didn't spoil me. Even when I was young, they sent me to vacation camps where I could learn how to fit in with others."

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUST IN LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

Louise Roy tends to trust people. What has she learned from her experience in this respect?

> "Basically, organizations are conflict-driven not by necessity, but because of political tension and stress, because they need to get results without always having the appropriate resources. In organizational situations, people talk about conflict, political relationships and positioning. I've suffered because I trusted people. I'm not a mistrustful person. This has sometimes caused problems in my life, but it's also generated more positive things than if I hadn't trusted people. It's important not to be drawn into games, but you mustn't be fooled by them either. You have to try to deal with conflict-driven environments by finding allies. I trusted people, but I was never foolish enough to think that some of them might not try to stab me in the back."

Honesty and trust, along with humour and good jokes, allowed her to relax the atmosphere and defuse conflicts, especially during negotiations at the STCUM. Primarily, Louise Roy appears to others as someone who is true and authentic.

Although her trust in her co-workers often allowed her to achieve success, she also, on occasion, had to deal with dysfunctional situations caused by people "who had a negative impact" or "unhealthy people who didn't set a good example". In Montreal, she never had a problem decoding these people or making the necessary changes. Abroad, however – in France, for example – the learning curve was slower and longer. She describes what happened when she was recruiting people to work for Air France:

> "I had to recruit people internally for some positions. I didn't know either the people or their culture, and I was asking them to work in a team, not to hold on to information, and to work with me in a relationship of trust. Clearly, in saying this to a group of French people, who'd always worked in an organization where everyone held on to every scrap of information, where they most certainly didn't work as a team, and where nobody trusted the manager because bosses were "the enemy" – well, I just wasn't speaking the same language! I believed them when they agreed to do it, and it took me six months to realize that we simply hadn't understood one another, and that I hadn't decoded either the people or the environment."

When working with English teams in London, with people who reacted in the same way as the French, she had no trouble decoding their behaviour, and was able to make the right decisions quickly. At IATA, her learning curve was so well-developed that it took her only three months to solve her organizational structure problems. "People learn – it's normal," she says, smiling. Then:

> "Today, people easily spend half their time managing budgets. But should they spend the other half managing people or talent? The message I convey in my meetings with people is this: you're good when your team is good. You shouldn't hesitate to surround yourself with people who are more competent. This is what I've always done. For example, I led a transportation firm. Being a sociologist, not an engineer, I knew nothing about the technical aspects, so I had to surround myself with people who were more competent than me in a host of areas. I never felt threatened or vulnerable, and I trusted them because I was contributing something else – people-oriented skills rather than an expertise. This aspect is fundamental for young people who find themselves in new leadership situations."

Holding an executive position does not simply mean having power and a good salary. It also means having responsibilities towards other people, by setting clear goals for them to achieve, helping them to succeed, and helping them to develop their talents.

What can be done to teach young people how to gauge people and environments? While peer evaluation is obviously important, they need to use the new evaluation tools that are now available, such as performance management, talent management and non-performance management. If they want to change, develop and – especially – innovate, they must also be able to reflect.

ENDNOTES

1 Most of the information used to write this case was collected during three interviews with Louise Roy, conducted by the authors on May 31, June 18 and September 28, 2007. The total interview time was approximately eight hours. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, in text form (77 pages). Translated by Benjamin Waterhouse from French; case C (# 9 40 2010 019) was entitled "Louise Roy : leader engagée et intrapreneure de la transformation d'organisations".

2 CIRANO, the French acronym for Centre interuniversitaire de recherche en analyse des organisations. For further information, please see the Centre's website: http://www.cirano.qc.ca.

3 During the first year (2003), the forum was composed solely of vice-presidents from CIRANO member organizations. Later, to Louise Roy's satisfaction, a number of women joined the group.

4 For example: What can a company do to keep the expertise of employees who leave? What can it do to solve intergenerational conflicts or conflicts of values? How can it share knowledge and expertise? Should it offer coaching and/or mentoring? What happens to an organization's culture in the case of a merger/acquisition? Is it possible to motivate staff by offering only a stimulating climate and dynamic supervision at work?

5 When women first started work in the STCUM garages, it quickly became clear that they were physically incapable of carrying 30-litre barrels – which, in any case, caused back injuries among the male employees, despite their strength. It was therefore decided to use 15-litre barrels for everyone, to reduce the number of workplace accidents.

Louise Roy: Intrapreneurship Through Organizational Change[1]

Case D
1940s- 1970s

Summary

Case D (Late 1940s-late 1970s) puts the emphasis on two important aspects of her upbringing: family background and education in a changing Québec society. Equally important is the description of some early experiences as a monitor in summer camps and her Graduate studies in Sociology at Madison, Wisconsin.

CHILDHOOD, ADOLESCENCE AND EDUCATION

A CLASSICAL EDUCATION AND ENGLISH: ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS

Louise Roy was born in Québec City in December 1947, and is an only child – an unusual phenomenon in post-war Québec, where families were often large. One thing is certain: her father, Louis Roy, and her mother, Henriette Gagnon, "would have liked a large family, but circumstances dictated otherwise"; in fact, Henriette had to undergo an operation that meant she could not have other children.

For Louis, who was 40 years old when he married 26-year-old Henriette, adoption was never an option because he felt he was "too old". As a result, all the parents' attention was focused on their daughter, who was brought up "a bit like a boy, with emphasis on success and going to university". Where did this intense need for academic success come from?

HER FATHER, LOUIS ROY, THE BLACK SHEEP OF THE FAMILY

When the Roy family first went to live in the city and enter the professions, they left behind a farming tradition that was the lot of many families in the late 19th century. Doctor Salluste Roy, Louise's grandfather, studied medicine at Laval University and specialized in psychiatry. He even went to study in Boston, Massachusetts, to perfect his training. As one of the first psychiatrists of his generation, and indeed of the province, he was not content simply to practice; he wanted to build something for the long term.

Dr. Salluste Roy distinguished himself in a number of respects, first by founding the St-Michel-Archange Hospital, of which he became the director, and then by creating the Roy-Rousseau Clinic. Both these institutions still exist today, bearing witness to his vision. As a pioneer in the development of psychiatry, an emerging discipline at the time, he left his mark on an entire era – and also, to some extent, on his granddaughter.

The doctor and his wife had eight children. In their upper-middle-class community, a classical education was a necessity. Nobody was exempt, not even Louis, the last-but-one. Louise Roy describes her father's childhood:

> "In my father's time, a classical education was the thing for the liberal professions. To get your classical diploma, you couldn't fail a single examination in the last year, because there was no way of re-taking them. Unfortunately my father failed his math exam, meaning that he didn't get his diploma. His friends went on to become lawyers and physicians. It was a blow to mygrandfather, who wanted one of his sons to follow him into the professions and become a

> physician, lawyer, notary or priest. My father, the black sheep, might not have been disciplined but he did have a lot of charisma and a sense of humour. He was thrown out of several colleges. For the last two years of his classical education, my grandfather sent him to study in Charlottetown, on Prince Edward Island. 'You can be a boarder! Finish your education, stop going to parties and don't enjoy yourself – life is serious!'"

Louis became a representative for an American company, West Kamicong, driving around the province selling brushes, soaps, floor waxes and disinfectants to convents and businesses. Louise Roy has this to say about the job's impact on her father: "My father felt like a failure all his life. It became an important component in my own educational path … When my father died in 1969, I was 21 years old. I'd just started university, in September 1968, and he was very proud of me."

Louis Roy was bilingual, and soon became Sales Manager for Eastern Canada, a promotion that led him to Montreal. However, his progression within the American firm, managed mainly by English speakers, would stop there.

AN UNSUAL MARRIAGE

On her mother's side, the Gagnon grandparents were from much more modest origins and hailed from Athabasca. They lived in the Limoilou neighbourhood of Québec City, and the grandfather worked for Imperial Tobacco. Henriette was the fourth of eight children. She was 26 years old when she met Louis Roy, just after the war. Louise Roy talks about a moment that changed the course of the family's story:

> "My father was 40 years old and my mother was 26. At the time, 40 was very old to get married! My father had had girlfriends before. He'd worked in Montreal and had travelled a bit. My mother was very beautiful and was criticized for marrying someone 14 years her senior. But marrying someone from Dr. Roy's family was a real step up for her. It was important to her."

Despite their differences in age, class and culture, her parents were very close.

What does she remember of her early years in Québec City? Her memories are centred around a series of photographs and a handful of people. "I have photographs of my grandfather's house, where my father grew up. It's a lovely big stone house just opposite the hospital, and it was where the doctor lived. It was built at the same time as the hospital, rather like they used to build presbyteries next to churches. My mother spoke a lot about the house, which she described as a place where everyone was happy and had fun." Life in the Roy household was dictated by Louis' job, which kept him on the road during the week. While he was gone, Louise studied and her mother took care of the house, and both waited for the weekend, when the family would be together again. During the summer, the family stayed in Les Éboulements, near St-Joseph-de-la-Rive in the Charlevoix region, where Louis rented a room in a family guest house. The setting may have been different, but the routine remained the same.

Louise Roy's education was influenced primarily by her parents. However, other people also left their mark on her childhood "because they did things differently from our family, and didn't conform". Her maternal uncle Raoul, a member of the Sacré-Coeur religious community, who became a missionary and mathematics teacher in Madagascar, sent colourful postcards that triggered her imagination. Later, he went to Algeria, where he left the church, got married and started a family.

On her father's side, there was her Aunt Mimi (Eugénie by her full name), who raised her sister Madeleine's four young children (Madeleine died of cancer at 40 years of age). "She was an exceptional woman, very courageous, and with an open enough mind to raise children" even though she was no longer young herself. And there was also her Uncle Paul, who was "very kind" and "extremely dignified". In short, her family environment was inspiring.

LIFE IN THE BIG CITY

In 1955, Louis Roy was appointed West Kamicong's Sales Manager for eastern Canada. He moved to Montreal with his wife and daughter, settling in the Ahuntsic neighbourhood, where their lifestyle was similar to the one they had in Québec City. Nevertheless, Louis Roy's family was close-knit, and in those early years every birthday or anniversary became an excuse for a trip back to Québec to visit relatives.

Over the years, they became used to their new city, but Montreal was clearly not Québec City – everything was bigger and spread over a larger area. Henriette, however, was not intimidated by the "big city", as she described it. On the contrary, she set out to explore its streets and avenues – by learning to drive, since there was no question of her becoming a prisoner of her own neighbourhood.

Louise Roy attended several different schools, depending on where the family was living at the time. Her parents sent her to private schools, usually run by nuns, to ensure that she got a good education. She has vivid memories of one particular incident, when she was in Grade 6. "In 1956, we'd just got a television set and I saw the tanks invading Hungary. I was so struck by what I saw that I organized a collection in my class at Madame de la Pelletrie School, to help the Hungarian refugees in Québec."

Already, at just nine years old, she was showing the first signs of her empathy for others. By organizing the collection, she also demonstrated her leadership, which continued to emerge as she obtained more responsibility in the vacation camps where she spent her summers. She describes her experience as a camp monitor as follows:

> "My parents were completely bilingual. My father had studied in English in Charlottetown and my mother had learned English in Ontario … They firmly believed you couldn't succeed in life if you weren't bilingual. There was no chance of economic mobility unless you spoke English and understood the English culture …

My father didn't have much money, but he made sacrifices so I could learn English. Every summer, from the time I was 9 years old, up to the age of 16, he sent me to a vacation camp in the United States. My first camp, when I was 9 years old, was in Maine, and in all the following years I went to Camp Bernadette near Wolfborough on Lake Wentworth in New Hampshire.

I started out as a camper, but when I was 14 or 15 years old I became a camp monitor for two months each summer. It was the first time in my teenage years that I had been given any kind of responsibility. I developed a lot of skills, in terms of leadership and also in various sports, including swimming, sailing, canoeing and so on. I taught these sports to the campers.

I've always thought the socialization I got in the camps was extremely educational and important in building my personality. I was far from my family, I had to share situations with other people – me, an only child – and I had to deal with a different environment, take responsibility and become independent."

In January 1960, the Roy family moved to Ville Saint-Laurent and Louise enrolled at the Basile-Moreau College[2], run by the Sisters of the Holy Cross, to start her classical education. She liked her new school, and found it stimulating. Over the years, she became involved in the school's intellectual activities and sports. She made friends, and spent less time at home, although enough to remember one particular incident that affected her deeply. "My father's boss, Mr. Hagen, lived in the Town of Mount Royal. He was Anglophone, and didn't speak a word of French. When I was 16 he sent me a gift for my graduation, and I wrote him a short letter to thank him. He called my father into his office: *"Louis, you'll tell to your daughter she has to write to me in English!"*

This anecdote, and other similar incidents, "crystallized the impressions of a 16-year-old from the 1960s, at a time when the independentist movement, the notion of Québec's identity and the importance of the French language were just beginning to emerge". Louise Roy regarded the colonization of her father and, to a lesser extent, her mother, as a major element in her political socialization. At the time she was somewhat radical and debated the issues keenly.

EDITOR OF THE *COLLEGIA-LAURENTIEN*

In 1964 and the following years, she found herself in at least two interesting situations that allowed her to exercise her leadership. In *Belles-Lettres* (the equivalent of Grade 10), she and some of her classmates were approached by Nicole Gladu, a student at Basile-Moreau College and also the editor of the student newspaper *Collegia*, and by Jean-Claude Scraire[3], Nicole's counterpart at St-Laurent College, who edited *Le Laurentien*.

These two students wanted to publish a joint weekly newspaper, and they needed an editor. At the meeting, to everyone's surprise, Jean-Claude Scraire presented the situation as a "done deal". Louise Roy describes what happened:

> "Nicole thought one of my good friends would make a great editor and asked me to propose her name and support the nomination. But Jean-Claude pre-empted me and said: "Louise, why don't you be the editor? What does everyone think?" I'd never considered the possibility before, but that's how I became the publication's new editor. Robert Pouliot was the deputy editor, and our two mentors were Jean-Claude and Nicole, along with Sister Tharcisius, our literature teacher, who was a kind of godmother to us."

Louise Roy discovered a passion for student journalism during her two years with the publication. She spent many of her evenings working for the newspaper, and had no hesitation in taking a position or writing an editorial, even if it was at odds with popular opinion[4]. She was also involved with the *Presse Étudiante Nationale* (PEN).

CAMP PAPILLON, AND SOME UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES

Camp Papillon, a vacation camp for physically handicapped children, is located on the shores of Lac Pierre, in the municipality of St-Alphonse-de-Rodriguez, near Joliette, roughly 50 kilometres east of Montreal. Louise Roy applied for a job there, so that she could use the skills she had developed at Camp Bernadette in New Hampshire. She describes her experience as follows: "Some of the children were on crutches and had handicaps that didn't prevent them from moving around, while others were in wheelchairs with very severe handicaps. I had some wonderful times there, and a wealth of human contact. I loved my experience, and it was important to me."

In July 1964, as one of the Camp's monitors, she was in charge of a group of eight boys between 7 and 9 years of age, and devised an innovative way of drawing them out of their lives as handicapped children. Every evening, before they went to bed, she told them a story about a character she invented, cowboy Michael Bounty, and his adventures of the day:

"Even though they were handicapped, I decided I'd take them away from the camp, for a kind of 'night under the stars' activity. So I started to prepare them gradually for the fact that Michael Bounty would be doing something very important outside the camp, and that we'd also be going to sleep outdoors for a night, in our sleeping bags, because if a cowboy could do it, we could too. And we did! We took everything we needed, and I told them the story of what happened to Michael Bounty. After our outing, I had to keep the story going every evening for the rest of the summer."

She thoroughly enjoyed the initiative, but her joy was short-lived, because in August she was appointed Troupe Leader, with responsibility for several monitors and about 60 children. The following summer she was camp director, with responsibility for roughly 100 boys and girls, and had much less contact with the children.

EXPO 67 AND THE YOUTH PAVILION

1967 was the year of Expo 67, when the eyes of the world were turned towards Montreal. It was also the year when Louise Roy finished her term as President of Basile-Moreau College. Between April and October, she was a hostess at the Expo 67 Youth Pavilion.

She describes this period, with its interviews, presentations, meetings, debates and personalities from throughout the world, as "a very important opportunity to develop an open mind, through new responsibilities. People trusted us and it helped us to develop a lot of self-esteem," she says.

A POTENTIAL CAREER?

At Basile-Moreau College, Louise Roy received a quality education focused on humanism. Her teachers – nuns such as Sister Tharcisius in literature and Sister Guylaine Roquet in philosophy and lay teachers such as Francine Lalonde in history, Lise Gauvin in literature and Marianne Roquet, also in history – were "true models of intelligent, accomplished women with good listening skills".

Although her involvement with *Collegia-Laurentien* when she was 16 had given her a taste for journalism, by the time she was 18 her focus had shifted to her sociology courses with Marcel Raffi, which she enjoyed because they opened the door to a brand new world. As she points out: "I had only one ambition: sociology for all issues relating to society, social change through social justice, and change through the development of ideas. And so I went to study sociology at the Université de Montréal in 1968".

Did she ever consider following in the footsteps of her psychiatrist grandfather? To do that, she would have needed to be strong in mathematics, which she was not, nor did she have any interest in trying. So how does she explain her choice of sociology, which also has a significant mathematics component?

> "I inherited my dislike of mathematics from my father. My math skills weren't strong enough for me to choose pure science, so I just wasn't interested. But I was interested in every aspect of the social sciences. I struggled through mathematics to be able to get into sociology, because you needed a strong math component for the statistics. I was very motivated, and took special classes so that I was sure of passing and wouldn't have to go through the same hell as my father."

The year 1968 remains in the collective memory as the year of world student uprisings. In September 1968, when Louise Roy started her Bachelor's degree in sociology, the Université de Montréal was still under occupation by the students.

Her own department was "monopolized by Marxists" including Emilio Deipola, an Argentinian who had fled the generals' dictatorship, and Vito Atic, a Yugoslavian specialist in urban sociology. Other professors, including Jacques Dofny (theory of social classes), Marcel Rioux (Québec issues), Arnaud Sales (statistics) and Hélène David (sociology of work) were less committed.

At the beginning of the new school year in 1968, the Department of Sociology had also introduced a new admission method. Gone were the large cohorts of 100 or even 200 students; instead, the Department accepted only the best 25 applicants from the colleges, with the aim of taking them through to the Master's program. Louise Roy's cohort was composed of 20 girls and five boys: "It was something else! I met a lot of intellectually interesting and very solid people," she says.

She spent all her time studying, and learned how to work as part of a team. She enjoyed working with "two or three people, women who were intellectually very rigorous. We learned a lot from one another."

In academic terms, her first year at university went well. In personal terms, however, the summer of 1969 was marked by two very different events: her marriage, and the death of her father.

INTRODUCTION TO ANTHROPOLOGY THROUGH A FIELD STUDY ON ATYPISM

Colette Moreux, a French anthropologist and professor in the Department of Sociology, worked on atypism[5], and in summer she took her team of researchers to the small town of Louiseville, near Trois-Rivières. Louise Roy, who was unable to join the team in her first summer, worked on a parallel study (leisure in rural areas) that led to the construction of the Maskinongé hockey stadium. The following summer, however, she threw herself into the atypism project, which she summarizes as follows:

> "We focused a lot on their private lives … We worked on religious beliefs, family values, relationship values … We tried to identify ruptures with community standards, and to find people who, although they appeared to be conforming to their society, nevertheless strayed off the beaten path through atypical behaviour. Women who didn't think in the same way as others, able to assert their difference and not be considered delinquent or marginalized … Some went to mass but had completely non-standard opinions about the Church and the role of the priest."

STUDYING SOCIOLOGY IN MADISON, WISCONSIN

Louise Roy was influenced significantly by European sociology in general and French sociology in particular, and would have liked to do her Master's degree and Ph.D. in France. However, she won a scholarship from the Woodrow Wilson Foundation and went to the United States instead. In the end, after several applications and examinations, it was the Department of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin in Madison that accepted the young couple (her husband was also a sociology student).

Their American adventure began in 1971. What were her impressions?
"It was a large public university, very cosmopolitan, that attracted people from around the world. Our department was huge, with 70 very interesting professors … There was no single line of thought; every possible trend was represented. There was everything from quantitative sociologists on the extreme right to qualitative sociologists on the extreme left. The Department was a mix of all these people.

At the Université de Montréal, in sociology, you were Marxist or you didn't exist. When I arrived in Madison, I was towards the left. They challenged me, and asked me if I'd read Marx. It wasn't the case at all; at the Université de Montréal, we read exegeses. It was all very stimulating. For me, it was a very intense experience, both intellectually and personally, in an exceptionally open environment.

Many of the professors left their mark on me, through their interest, and helped me to develop intellectual rigour and analytical skills. The competition was very strong. I worked like a dog for almost four years; it was very demanding in terms of the quality of the thinking, and the relevance and volume of the reading. We were in an American university machine where people didn't fool around."

Contrary to the monolithic society of which she was a product, and the homogeneous environment at the Université de Montréal (in terms of both ideas and cultural diversity), Louise Roy discovered "a pluralist community that was extremely tolerant of differences" in the United States of the 1970s.

Certainly, the international context – the end of the Vietnam War and the conflict in Cambodia – and the national context – the Watergate scandal and the resignation of President Nixon – were conducive to this.

And there were also the emerging feminist and gay movements! Also during her time in Madison, she discovered the Jewish community and the English communities of Toronto and Montreal. She readily admits that she learned the art of tolerance and acceptance while she was in Madison. It was a constant challenge, and she was well aware that her experience was not only important from an intellectual and human standpoint, but also personally stimulating and intense.

At first she lived on campus at the University, but then moved to a large house in the city. She joined a feminist awareness group, and began to realize that, since her marriage, she had lost a lot of her autonomy, independence and self-esteem. The group's discussions made her aware that she was in a situation that no longer satisfied her. "I was part of a feminist Awareness Raising Group composed of gay women, married women and single women. We came together to talk about the status of women and male-female relationships. I heard all kinds of things."

She wrote a Master's dissertation on the sociology of culture[6] and worked extensively with Professor Marcel Teitler, a Dutch Jew, who introduced her to the sociology of knowledge and the sociology of culture. Her field research took her to Chicago, the closest city to Madison, to study the activities of community organizations. It was during this period that she also began to develop an interest in urban issues and the impacts of transportation on urban life.

Louise Roy had always been attracted to "authentic" people, whether in her own family or among her teachers in Montreal and Madison. She was someone who made discoveries and learned from them. When she went back to Montreal in 1975, having completed her doctoral courses, she thought of continuing her Ph.D. in France. However, a job offer changed the course of her life; she began work on a series of studies for Québec's planning and development bureau (commonly known by its French acronym OPDQ) and the province's transportation ministry, and in the end did not complete her doctoral thesis (see Appendix A).

HER EARLY CAREER: SOME INTERESTING ISSUES

THE TRANSPORTATION FIELD: MUCH-NEEDED EXPERTISE

When she went back to Montreal, she had developed a passion for urban and cultural questions, and was drawn to action-research, with its more concrete issues. It was for this reason that she accepted a series of short contracts from Multi-Réseau, a "small firm that did research in the field of social science". For the next year she would study a number of very different subjects, ranging from the future of parole to the future of television advertising in Canada. Clearly, not all of these subjects were directly related to the areas she had studied at university, but they were like a breath of fresh air, bringing her some much-needed contact with real-life issues.

In 1975, the OPDQ was asked to produce a development plan for the Montreal region, and opened up a number of positions for young graduates. Louise Roy was hired as a socio-economic research officer, a position she held for five years. She worked on several sociological and political impact studies, including a potential fast rail link between Mirabel airport and Montreal.

SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT

She also looked around for opportunities to become involved in social and political life, and began to take part in the activities of the RCM[7], a municipal political party founded in May 1974 by a group of citizens who were dissatisfied with Mayor Jean Drapeau's administration. Its goal was to represent all residents of Montreal, and in it Louise Roy found the mix of cultures and people to which she had become accustomed in Madison. She felt it was an opportunity "to work within a group that was truly interested in urban issues and social change in the city", and "to use my research findings as a basis for action".

Louise Roy worked alongside Jacques Couture, one of the RCM's founders, as well as Abe Limonchik, a Ukrainian Jew married to a Québec woman, Dimitri Rousopoulos, who founded the magazine *Our Generation Against the War*, and other members of Montreal's English-speaking community, during the planning of the Metro line that would serve Ville Saint-Laurent. She describes the research process as follows:

> "The transport ministry was planning the Orange line to Ville Saint-Laurent. The metro station was to be built alongside the Blue Bonnets horse racing stadium, on the west side of Décarie Boulevard. We fought for it to be located on the east side instead, where all the people were. The area had a large immigrant population, including a number of visible minorities, and we could see they needed direct access.
>
> I worked with Limonchik to put together a file containing detailed information on the number of households on the east side. I worked through the night to develop arguments and prepare statistics so that we could defend our point of view at a presentation to the transport ministry the following day.
>
> In Québec City, I met with Jean-Robert Choquette, who was the Chief of Staff of Transport Minister Lucien Lessard. Our proposal was a factor in his decision to locate the metro station on the east side of Décarie Boulevard. It was a major victory for us. We were able to influence a decision in favour of a specific philosophy. The new station was called Namur.

Louise Roy was busy with more than the RCM. She was offered the chance to teach 45 hours of urban sociology and planning at the Department of Sociology in the Université de Montréal's School of Architecture. Her original one-year commitment was extended until 1981. "I discovered just how much I enjoyed communication, teaching and the student-teacher relationship," she says. "I learned a lot from my students. They opened my mind. We worked on architectural thinking, and a bit on the sociology of architecture." She adds: "Giving this optional course was a good way of connecting my professional interests with what I was doing for the RCM, and it forced me to think about a certain number of issues. I really enjoyed it, and the students seemed to like me."

A YOUNG PROFESSIONAL IN GREAT DEMAND

Her well-documented, well-presented research and her flexible approach to her projects began to attract attention from senior civil servants in Montreal's transportation sector, and in 1980 she was appointed Project Manager for Montreal's regional transportation board, with responsibility for planning transportation links between Montreal and the South Shore of the St. Lawrence River. With her background in general sociology, she was able to lead multidisciplinary teams composed of engineers, economists and urban planners. She was particularly attentive to the socio-political aspects of management, to ensure that her projects would be accepted. She describes her approach as follows:

> "Previously, people weren't consulted much, and their ideas and perspectives weren't incorporated into projects. Maybe because I was a sociologist and more aware of the social and political aspects, I knew it was important to introduce consultation processes for the general public and elected representatives.

Even today, projects that fail do so because they're not managed properly from a social standpoint. With my capacity for synthesizing, I was able to combine the technical, economic and urban aspects of the projects. My contribution was to organize meetings with the municipalities concerned, and then to explain, try to convince, and listen to their concerns.

If the technical ministries don't manage their projects properly from the social and political standpoint, don't try to understand people's concerns and where they're coming from, and don't try to include and develop people's attitudes, their projects won't be accepted. Project leaders tend to come from highly technical cultures in which the human aspects aren't considered."

In 1981, the passenger transportation division of the transport ministry took over the transportation board, and Louise Roy became a ministry employee. Her expertise, which had developed over time, was becoming increasingly relevant and sought-after. In 1982, the transportation ministry[8] asked her to join the team responsible for producing the White Paper entitled *Public Transit, A Regional Choice*. At the time, there was a great deal of thought given to the development of public transit in urban areas and the design of transit projects. She summarizes her frustration with the government apparatus and the time it took to implement projects:

> "The approach included all the infrastructures, tariffs, institutional stewardship issues and so on … The period in Cabinet was interesting, in terms of the thinking behind the introduction of new solutions for passenger transportation … The mayor of Montreal recently announced his transit plan (in 2007). If you read the texts we wrote in 1982, you can see these are the same projects that have simply never been implemented 25 years after the fact. I've become frustrated over the years, because a lot of good projects have never come to fruition."

Louise Roy went back to the transportation ministry in September 1983, as manager of planning and passenger transit studies. However, although she did not know it at the time, a telephone call that she would shortly receive from the executive council of Québec's transit boards[9] was about to change the course of her life (see Case A).

ENDNOTES

1 Most of the information used to write this case was collected during three interviews with Louise Roy, conducted by the authors on May 31, June 18 and September 28, 2007. The total interview time was approximately eight hours. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, in text form (77 pages). Translated by Benjamin Waterhouse from French; case D (# 9 40 2010 020) was entitled "Louise Roy : leader engagée et intrapreneure de la transformation d'organisations".

2 Following the Parent Report and the ensuing reform, Basile-Moreau College went on to become Vanier CEGEP, or Vanier College, and St-Laurent College became St-Laurent CEGEP. The two institutions are located next to one another on Sainte-Croix Boulevard in Ville St-Laurent, between College Street and Church Street.

3 He went on to become President of the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec.

4 Louise Roy, a non-smoker, nevertheless campaigned for students to have the freedom to smoke.

5 The study was entitled "How are atypical behaviours developed in standardized, highly conformist communities?"

6 Her dissertation examined legitimization processes in the media.

7 RCM is the French acronym for Rassemblement des citoyens et des citoyennes de Montréal.

8 Transport Minister Michel Clair, who was from Drummondville, was unfamiliar with the Montreal region, whereas Louise Roy had worked on transit-related issues for a number of years.

9 There are five transit boards in Québec, three of which are in the Montreal region: one for the South Shore, one for Laval and one for the Montreal Urban Community. The two other boards cover Québec City and the Outaouais region.

APPENDIX A

Louise Roy – Short Biography

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Since May 2003
CIRANO (Centre interuniversitaire en analyse des organisations)
Associate Fellow, Chair of the Leadership of the Future Forum

July 2000 to January 2003
IATA (International Air Transport Association)
Senior Vice-President, Marketing and Commercial Services

1997 to 2000
Télémédia Communications Inc.
President and Chief Executive Officer

1994 to 1997
Groupe Air France
Executive Vice-President, Americas Division (1994-1996)
Executive Vice-President, World Marketing and Quality (1996-1997)

1992 to 1994
Groupe La Laurentienne
Senior Vice-President

1985 to 1992
Société de transport de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal (STCUM)
President and Chief Executive Officer

1976 to 1985
Office de planification et de développement du Québec (OPDQ)
Ministère des transports du Québec (MTQ)
Director – Studies and Planning

