

*This is an edited transcript of the Forum held by CEU Business School.*

**MISSING LINK DISCOVERED:**  
**Planting Csíkszentmihályi's Flow Theory**  
**into**  
**Management and Leadership Practice**  
**held on Monday, November 9, 2015**

CEU AUDITORIUM, Budapest V, Nádor u. 9

Welcome remarks by **Mel Horwitch, Dean**, CEU Business School

<b>Paul Marer</b>	Prof. of Business, CEU Business School, <i>co-author</i>
<b>Zoltan Buzády</b>	Prof. of Management, CEU Business School, <i>co-author</i>
<b>Zad Vecsey</b>	CEO of ALEAS Simulations, Budapest and Los Angeles., <i>co-author</i>
<b>Mihály Csíkszentmihályi</b>	Distinguished Prof. of Psychology & Management, Claremont Graduate University, California, <i>contributor</i>

One of world's most distinguished social science scholars is Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, whose renown rests especially on his Theory of Flow:

*"A mental state in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment".*

Until recently, insufficient attention has been paid to the many ways in which Flow Theory ideas can be used and leveraged by managers and leaders to enhance successful practice. Filling this gap, a panel of CEU Business School professors and invited experts in the field discussed how the Theory of Flow can be innovatively mastered by leaders, managers, entrepreneurs, students, and just about anyone, as a way of simultaneously improving individual satisfaction, organizational effectiveness and societal well-being.

The Forum introduced a just-published book on this topic.

**Prof. Paul Marer** (see bio at end):

This event is labeled not as a series of lectures, not as a conference, not as a workshop, but as a forum. A forum means, first, that each of the four panelists will offer ideas and personal stories – not lectures – that we hope you will find interesting and perhaps useful in some ways. The stories will focus on the following topics:

*Slide:*

- *The concept and application of Flow*
- *Leadership and Flow*
- *Teaching innovations related to Leadership and Flow*
- *New research vistas and plans on Leadership and Flow*

I'll introduce these topics briefly; my colleagues will elaborate them.

The second reason this is a forum is that about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the two-hour program is reserved for your participation: comments, suggestions, questions.

I must start with an apology: The organizers received written requests for participation from more than twice as many persons as expected. Even this Auditorium – the largest space at CEU – cannot accommodate everyone. Therefore, we are streaming the proceedings into two large rooms upstairs as well as to outside the Auditorium. We welcome the other half of the audience upstairs and outside. You can hear us and see us but will not be able to ask Qs or make comments, live. We apologize to you for the unavoidable “discrimination”. Thank you for understanding.

To alleviate the problem that some in the audience will not be able to contribute live, we opened a messaging wall on the Facebook event page of this Forum. You'll find the hyperlink to the messaging wall. <https://goo.gl/PJy1DW>

We also welcome persons around the world who are viewing us live, via *ustream* broadcast.

### THE CONCEPT AND APPLICATIONS OF “FLOW”

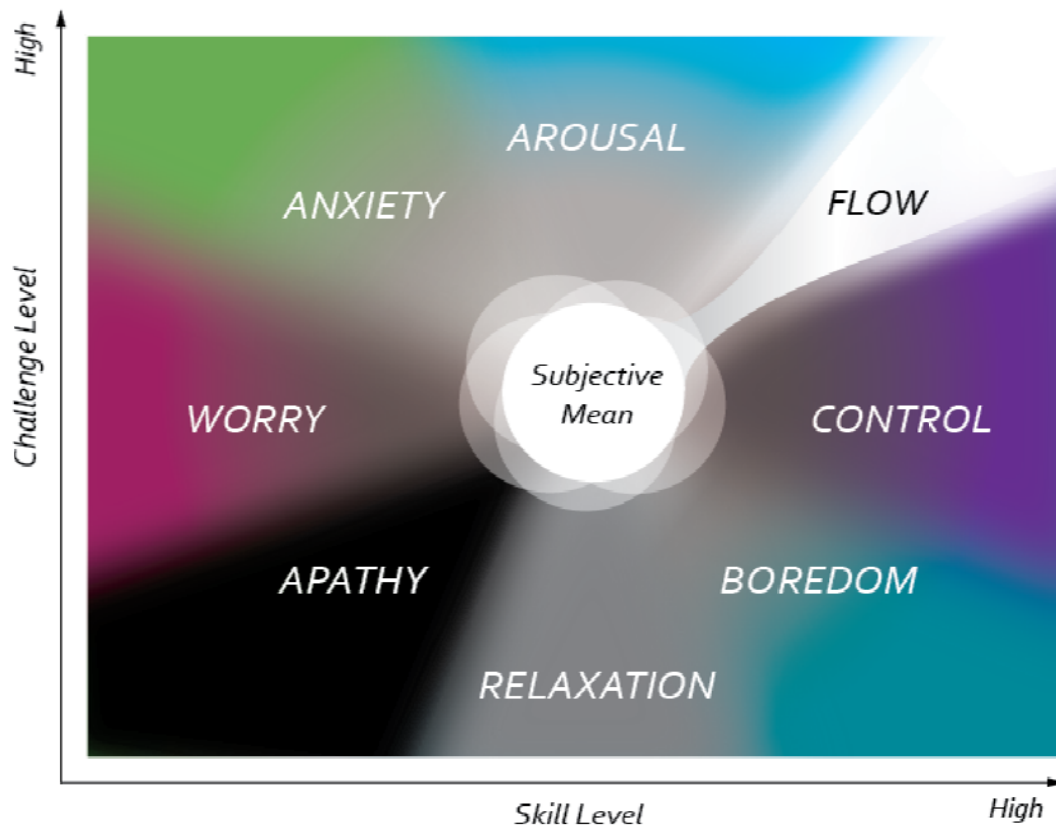
The three of us on the podium are most pleased to be on the same panel with one of world's leading social scientists of Hungarian origin: Prof. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. It is difficult for non-Hungarians to pronounce his name, so his colleagues and students call him Prof. Cheek; his friends address him by his first name, Mihaly.

Prof. Cheek is one of the founding fathers of positive psychology: that branch of the discipline that focuses not on treating mental illness but on a scientific understanding of what it means, and how to achieve, a good and happy life that is also socially productive.

Prof. Cheek has done decades of path-breaking research to understand the thinking, the feeling, and the motivations of ordinary people, like you and I. An example of his pioneering research decades ago: his team gave beepers to well over 100 high-school students in

Chicago. At any time when the beeper sounded, the student had to report what he or she was doing at the time and the mood state he or she was in.

*Slide: States of Mood of an Average Person*



What Prof. Cheek found was that while most students complained most of the time (reporting anxiety, worry, apathy, boredom), they felt the best when they were absorbed in a challenge that interested them.

The arrangement of the eight states of mind is arbitrary. Moods can jump from any state to any other state w/o having to touch any intermediate mood state.

Prof. Cheek did in-depth interviews with hundreds (if not thousands) of persons, ranging from assembly-line workers to Nobel-prized scientists. His key finding was similar to that with the high-school students: the subjects felt the best (were the happiest, so to speak) when they were deeply absorbed in trying to meet a challenge. To this discovery, Prof. Cheek gave the label, Flow, because the most frequent analogy his subjects used to describe their mood when they were deeply absorbed in a challenge was as if they were carried, effortlessly by a gently-flowing river.

*Slide:*

*Definition of Flow: A mental state in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment.*

## FLOW AND MANAGEMENT/LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

The concept of Flow has found research and practical applications in many fields, including:

*Slide:*

- *Psychology*
- *Self-improvement*
- *Religion*
- *Sports*
- *Music*
- *Education*
- *Architecture*
- *Leadership/Management*

At CEU Bus School, our focus of course has been on the implications of Flow for management and leadership.

\* \* \*

There is a raging debate in the literature on whether managers and leaders are the same or different species. Many experts say that they are different. Their frequently cited mantra is that “managers do things right; leaders do the right things.”

*Slide: the above quote*

The three authors on the panel agree with one of the best known professors of management who says that the distinction between leaders and managers is artificial and unnecessary:

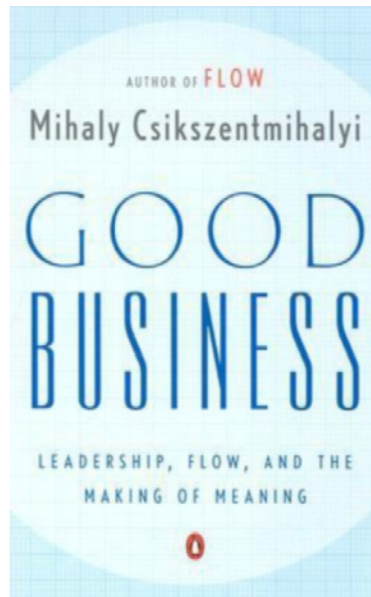
*Slide: “Leadership involves plumbing as well as poetry. Instead of distinguishing leaders from managers, we should encourage all managers to be leaders. And we should define leadership as management practiced well.”*

Thus, to us, management and leadership are interchangeable terms.

\* \* \*

How Flow and leadership got linked is an interesting story. In the 1990s, Prof. Cheek was chair of the Psychology Dept of the U of Chicago. Prof. Peter Drucker, arguably the most influential management guru of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and a prof at Claremont Grad U in California at the time, was able to convince Prof. Cheek and his wife, Isabella to exchange cold and windy Chicago for the blue skies and sunshine of California. In 2000 the Csikszentmihalyis moved to Claremont. Mihaly became Chair Prof of Psychology & Management (a chair he occupies still). Befitting a prof also of management, in 2003 Prof. Cheek published:

*Slide: book title and publisher*



The book has countless practical examples and psychological insights on what it means – and why it pays -- to manage one-self, one's team, one's organization in accordance with the precepts of the theory of Flow.

My one-sentence summary of the book:

*Slide:*

“The best way to manage people is to create an environment where employees enjoy their work and grow in the process of doing it.”

Enhanced worker satisfaction and engagement is a win-win situation for all stakeholders of an organization – be it a business, a university, an NGO, or a government agency – because

*Slide:*

- *Individuals satisfied at work – where they spend one-third of their working lives – contributes to their happiness*
- *Such workplaces attract the most able individuals and likely to keep them longer*
- *Obtains spontaneous effort from most as they do their tasks*
- *Promotes individual and team productivity*
- *Improves organizational performance, broadly defined*

\* \* \*

I mentioned that Prof. Cheek is a founding father of positive psychology: a scientific study of what it means, and how to achieve, a good and happy life that is also socially productive.

An integral part of the theory and practice of Flow is behavior that is guided by an individual ethical responsibility framework:

*Slide: Flow-based Ethical Responsibility Framework for Individuals & Leaders*



Csikszentmihalyi's three recommendations -- do no harm for selfish reasons, help others experience Flow, and contribute to something beyond yourself – are permanently relevant to us -- as individuals as well as managers/leaders.

### FLOW AND TEACHING INNOVATIONS

To introduce our third topic, teaching innovations related to Leadership and Flow, I'll share a story:

A quarter century ago I taught a student, sitting on the podium, Zad Vecsey, and we have kept in touch ever since. Zad, who has an MBA from the London Business School and started his career as a management consultant with Coopers and Lybrand, joined his small family mgmt. consulting firm 20 years ago. He gradually changed the firm's profile from "jawboning" to building management simulation games. Over the years he won first Hungary's, later the EU's top prize for creating innovative management simulation games.

In 2004, Zad's firm and CEU Business School signed a strategic partnership agreement: Zad's firm gave the School unrestricted free access to all of his firm's e-learning and simulation products in return for receiving student and faculty feedback on them.

Although my own specializations are IB, economics and finance, in 2012 I was asked to teach a strategic management course to Executive MBAs. As I was preparing for the course,

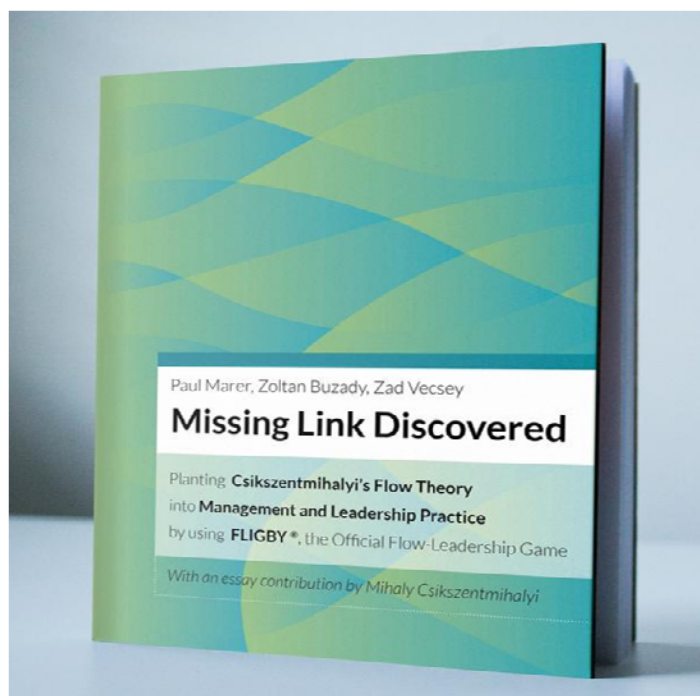
Zad called with great excitement that the new leadership simulation game he conceived and his firm developed just won the gold medal at the Seattle world congress where hundreds of new “serious games” were competing for prizes. He explained that the game teaches students as future managers (as well as current managers) on how to make decision after decision in accordance with Prof. Cheek’s Flow-promoting theory of leadership, and that he developed the award-winning game together with the Prof.

“Hey Zad”, I asked, “may I use your new game in my strategic management course?” “Of course you may. In fact, we only have the Beta version, which means that while the game is complete, it has not yet been tested. You and your students will provide useful feedback, exactly as stated in the strategic partnership agreement we signed years ago.”

My CEU Bus School colleague, Zoltan Buzady -- who had used Zad’s earlier management simulation games in his courses -- also got involved. The two of us have been working with Zad and his staff ever more intensively during the past few years, so much so that we wrote a book together, *Missing Link Discovered*, being published today. You’ll find out more about it from my colleagues. Our book links – scientifically and interestingly, we believe -- the theory and practice of Flow, their implications for managing and leading organizations, with the newest effective methods of teaching current and future managers/leaders via a state-of-the art simulation game that is absorbing and fun to play.

To cut myself short and to make this event a Forum, as announced, I hope that some of the students I see in the audience, who played the game in my course in 2012, will share some of their experiences during the Q & A period; not so much on the technical aspects of the Game but the management/leadership lessons it teaches.

Let me close by showing you the title page of our new book, which integrates -- scientifically and readably – the four themes of this Forum:



Oh yes, the fourth theme of this Forum is our ambitious plan to build, together with Prof. Cheek's Quality of Life Research Center at Claremont, and others, a global Leadership and Flow research program and network that is also being launched today.

It is my pleasure to turn over the microphone to my colleague, Zoltan Buzady, whose presentation will elaborate on the themes I introduced.

**Prof. Zoltan Buzady** (see bio at the end).

I will make a few remarks on four of the topics. Specifically:

*Slide:*

- Leadership & leadership skills
- Flow-based leadership skills
- Teaching leadership
- The “Leadership & Flow” Research Program

So what is leadership? - I quote from Mihaly’s essay in our new book.

*Slide*

“Good management is not perfectly definable and not precisely measurable.”

Indeed so. Yet, effective managers are supposed to possess a pretty well-defined set of skills – a set, on which there is by and large a consensus among academics as well as practitioners. Here is an example of a standard set of leadership skills:

*Slide: A typical set of management/leadership skills*



This particular one has 29 items. It happens to be the one that Mihaly and Zad jointly have identified, based on Mihaly's *Good Business* book. They are also the skills that are identified in the leadership simulation game I'll come to in a moment.

By the way, these skills here are much the *same* as those one would find in *most other* standard leadership-skills classification systems.

Most of those skills can be learned. Of course, differences among people in their born-with abilities make it easy for some to learn and to apply those skills and more difficult for others.

And there are some - or maybe many?- in leadership positions who are highly intelligent and educated, but are so full of themselves that their way of managing is not grounded in best-practices validated by academic research as well as by practitioners. Such bosses may be driven by some emotional need to satisfy some "particular" personal ambition or to hide a weakness they themselves may not be fully aware of. Such bosses can block initiatives by others, often hindering their colleagues and subordinates to experience "Flow" on the job.

*Slide:*



*"It's always 'Sit,' 'Stay,' 'Heel'—never  
'Think,' 'Innovate,' 'Be yourself.'"*

It is also a fact of life that the world around us has changed, and will continue to do so, with important implications for management/leadership.

One of the most important trends in recent decades is that leaders increasingly have to manage knowledge workers, not physical workers! Knowledge workers want not just a paycheck, but (importantly, among other things) a work environment that enables them to experience Flow.

For the above and for many other reasons, a *certain subset of leadership skills* is *becoming* more important -- today and tomorrow -- for management to be effective. This, in a way, is the essence of Mihaly's contribution in his *Good Business* book that Paul mentioned:

*Slide: 4 Flow-based skills*



Among the 29 management skills, four are especially important for helping others to experience Flow:

- 1) Strategic thinking -- that is, setting clear goals and priorities. # 27
- 2) Realizing and engaging for a common purpose the personal strengths of employees. #24
- 3) Balancing, dynamically, the skill and challenge levels of key employees - and they, in turn, should do the same for their subordinates. # 4
- 4) Giving frequent and actionable *Feedback*. # 27

## TEACHING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Let me now turn to teaching leadership skills.

I used to teach it in what might be called the conventional way: assigning readings and case studies, several of which I wrote myself, then discussing them in the classroom. The approach was OK. But something was not fully satisfactory, something was missing.

For example, academic writings on the topic are too scholarly, too abstract, focusing only on general principles, with applicable illustrations that were often hard to implement in other situations that are not really identical to the textbook illustrations.

Many case studies, while helpful, tend to mirror insufficiently the *real dilemmas* leader routinely face. In real life they have to make choices almost continuously, not just one big strategy decision, like “yes or no”, or choose between the few simplified options that so many cases studies offer.

For these reasons, years ago already I was drawn to leadership-content simulations games, such as those developed by this Gentleman on the podium (-> Zad). I found them to be more realistic ways to teach students what it is like to be a manager than either textbooks or case studies. A good leadership simulation teaches that a leader has to be guided by key objectives as well as by certain basic principles. Even after strategic directions have been agreed upon, there is no easy formula on how to apply them in practice, day-to-day, on the many decisions a manager has to make continuously on team and organization issues.

Therefore, instead of some magic formula, the workable approach is to be guided by the agreed upon key objectives and to act according to basic principles of FLOW.

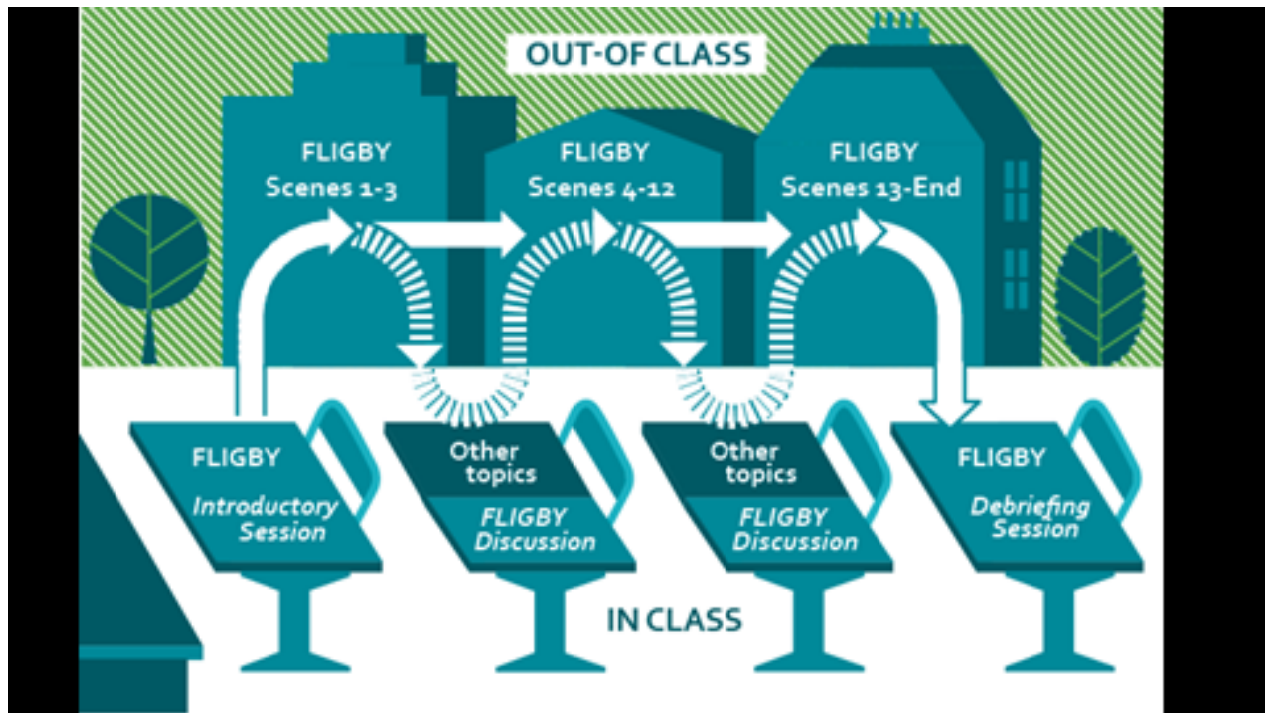
This brings me to the award-winning game produced by Zad and his team, about which our book is partly about. The story, in a nutshell:

You, the individual player, have just become the new GM of a mid-size winery in California. Your predecessor was one of those bosses who excelled in dividing his team, pitting one against the other, thus doing a good job in destroying the morale. This has started to adversely impact profitability, too.

To make a long story short: you, the new GM, have to make about 150 decisions during the virtual span of 6 months. The game takes you 6 to 10 hours to complete; you can stop and start any time. All your decisions are “saved” in the cloud, on the basis of which the player’s leadership skills -- not only the 4 mentioned - but also each of the other 25 in the skillset -- are measured and appropriately benchmarked.

You in the audience (and the reader) might wonder how can one use in a course a game that takes 10 hours to complete. The answer is a recent teaching innovation, called the flipped classroom!

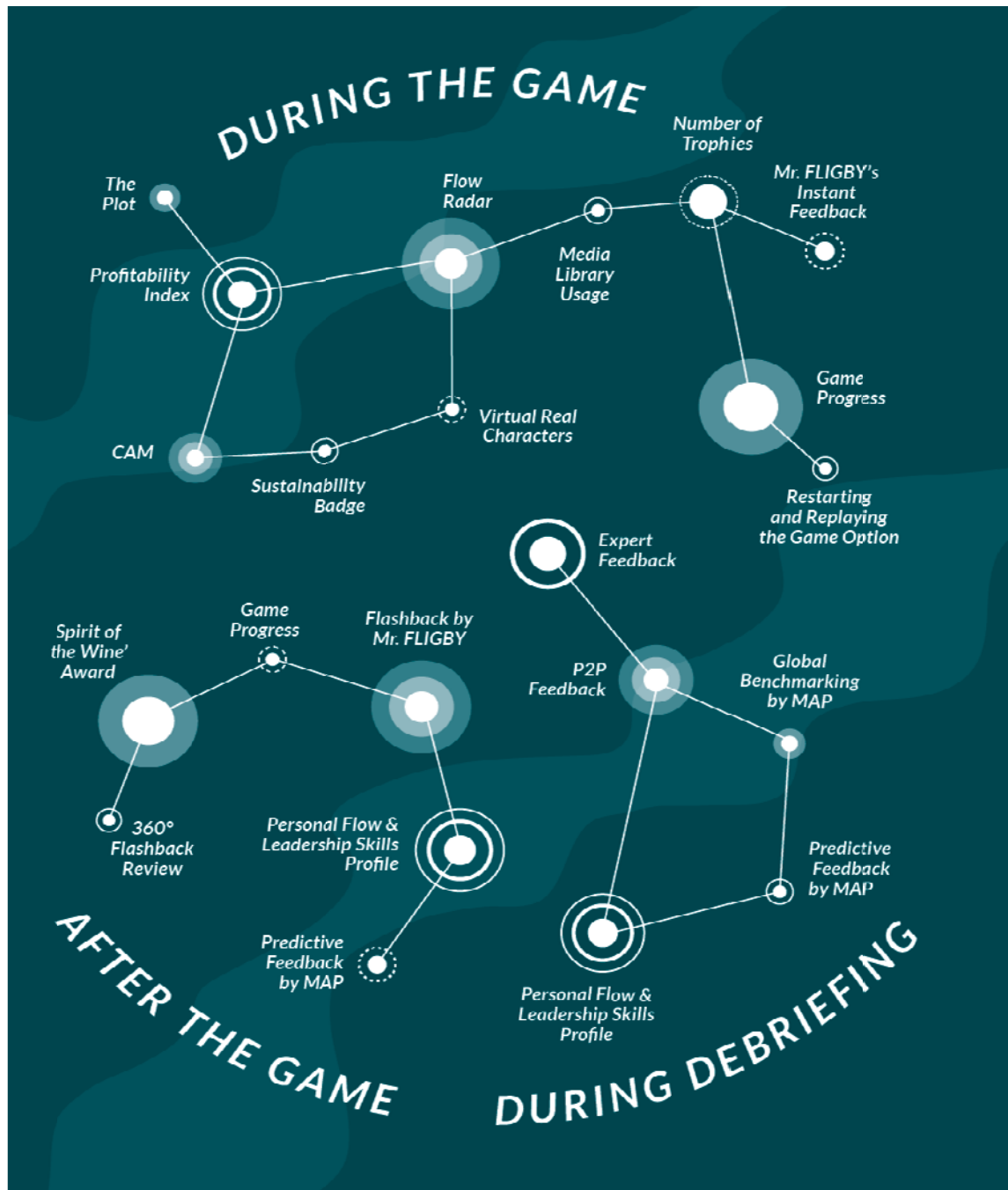
*Slide: Flipped classroom*



After a relatively detailed introductory session, during which we discuss Flow-theory basics, and all the technical stuff related to the simulation game, students play the game at home, during their private time. They do on-line readings, and prepare individual or group assignments, or write blogs. During the in-between sessions we devote some time to discuss simulation-related questions and topics. The debriefing session at the conclusion of the game is particularly important! Then the players receive the individual game scores and their personal leadership skills profiles. We then start to discuss their learning moments and future plans as leaders in their own business context, with a focus on applying Flow-based leadership concepts and tools.

Zad's game has many innovative features. Let me emphasize just one: its system of feedback. There are 19 different types of feedback in this simulation. All are personalized and instantaneous, driven by the 150 management decisions taken during the game play. Remember - getting *immediate & actionable feedback* is a *key precondition* of getting into Flow. There are so *many different modes and timing on how those* playing the game, receive feedback, that I have labeled it: the 'Galaxy of feedback'.

Slide: Galaxy of feedback slide



This illustration is too detailed to be explained its details here. It just wanted to give you a visual image of how many different types of feedback there are during the game, when the game is over and during the final debriefing session in class. You can read more about it our book.

## NEW VISTAS FOR LEADERSHIP AND FLOW RESEARCH

So far nearly 10,000 people have played the game and more will do so in the future. Since each player has to make 150 decisions, that yields millions of observations on individuals' leadership skills.

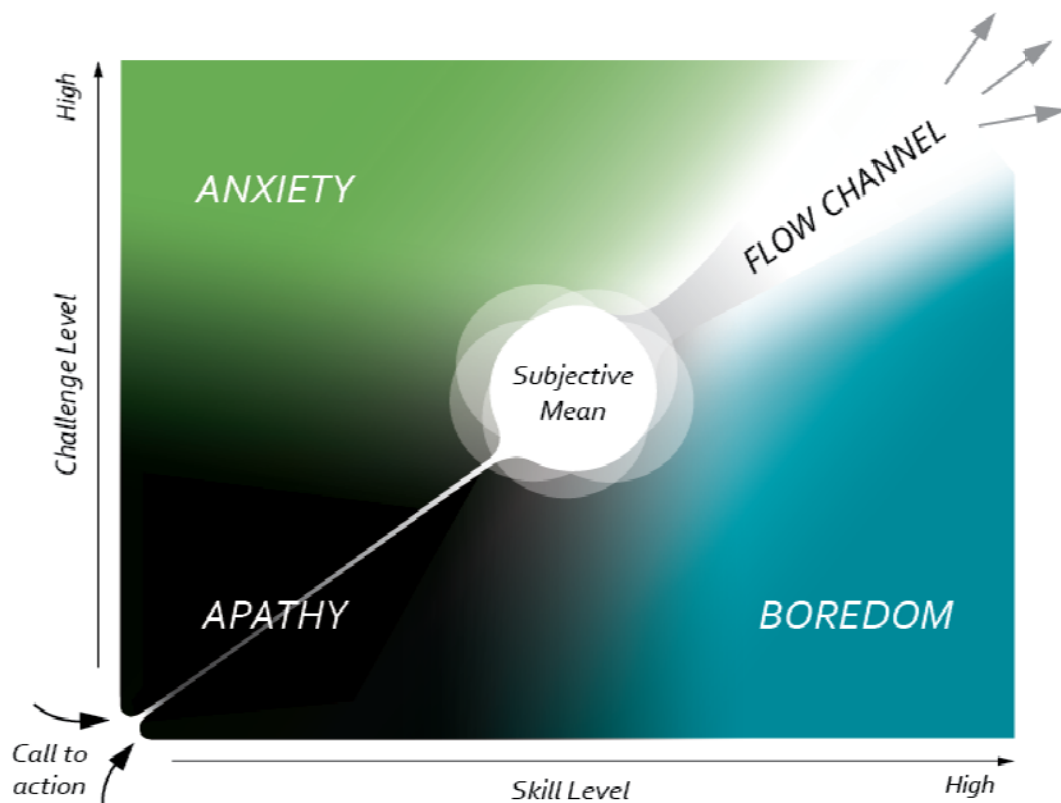
*Slide: New vistas for research*

- Observations: Millions of decisions
- Quality: Unbiased data
- Focus: Best matching of skills level & leadership challenges

The significance here is not the quantity of the observations but the quality of the data: it is unbiased, in contrast to *self-evaluation* test or rating done by someone else. As we found this new set of valuable data, which we did not consider, nor did the designers of the game gave it much thought when they started, we have been pondering how to make good scholarly and practical use of this exceptional data set?

New vistas for Leadership and Flow research opened. I'll mention briefly my own current research interest. Let us remember that one of the most important preconditions of getting into Flow is the dynamic matching of skills and challenges.

*Slide: Flow channel*

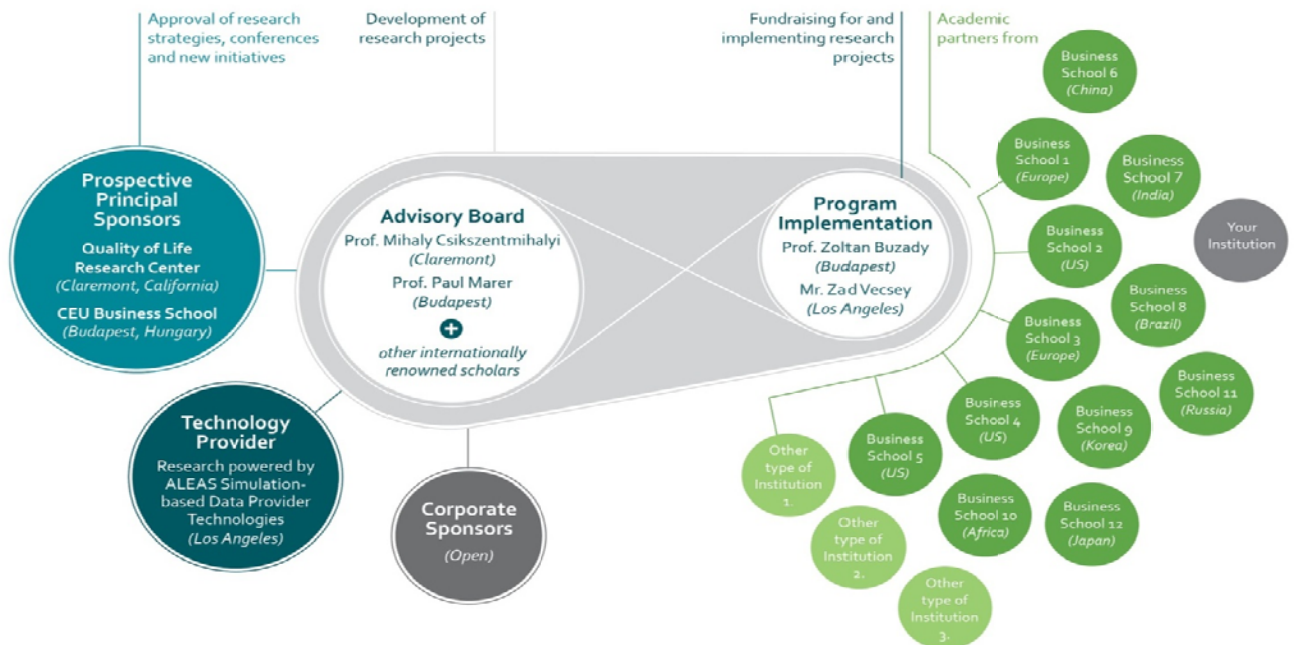


A relatively high level of challenges and matching skills are preconditions for getting into Flow. Whilst Skill Level has been amply explored by scholars and practitioners, “challenges” is a rather vague and fuzzy a concept.

My personal research interest is to come up with a meaningful classification of challenges; the kind that managers and leaders typically face. If I succeed, my categorization of challenges would be of help to better match skills and challenges, for the benefit of individuals and organizations. This is what several of us discussed with Mihaly at dinner last night.

We think there are potentially many other research questions that can be investigated by using this rich, unbiased dataset. It is for this reason we are initiating a global ‘Leadership & Flow’ program and network.

*Slide: Leadership and Flow global research network*



*On the left side* you can see, all those who are with us at the inception, such as Mihaly’s Quality of Life Research Center at Claremont. At this point I would like to thank the Dean of CEU Business School for his willingness to consider that CEU Business School be one of the founding sponsors of this new research initiative.

*The right hand side* shows that we are now inviting academic and business partners from all over the world to join the “Leadership and Flow” network. Participants will exchange information, cooperate on new research projects, and help disseminate innovations on teaching and training via games that simulate what good leadership is about.

Inspired by Prof. Csikszentmihalyi’s pioneering research on Flow, and then on Flow and leadership, today is the day of publication of our new book, about which our co-author, Zád Vecsey will probably say something about.

I am turning the microphone over to Zád, who has gotten increasingly involved with CEU Business School over the years, for the mutual benefit of both.

**Mr. Zad Vecsey** (bio at the end):

Thanks, Zoltan. OK, let me tell you my story. The last eight years were the journey of my life. But before going into the details, I want to answer a simple question: “what am I doing here, in this academic forum, as the CEO of a small but highly innovative company?”

I’m an illustration of what Dean Horwitch mentioned in his welcome: not only an entrepreneur building successful leadership games, but an innovative one. Although I am a Hungarian, working here and running a Californian-Hungarian company from Budapest, at the same time I have to be internationally connected to be able to perform well in my technical capabilities, sales and marketing, and now, as the case in point, becoming a part of an int’l academic network.

In order to be a successful entrepreneur, I have to be also intelligently and realistically opportunistic. (My initial target market for FLIGBY was multinationals, but as the opportunities to get linked with academia arose, due to personal contacts, new vistas for product development and applications arose.

I started my career at Coopers & Lybrand. There; and ever since then, I met too many dysfunctional (“huff and puff”) managers and leaders. I felt the challenge to do something I liked to do and at the same time to be useful, to give meaning to my professional life.

So I started to develop management games, realizing that this field will continue to expand rapidly for as far in time as one can see. I was fortunate to win first Hungary’s top prize in serious games in 2003; later on the EU’s top prize in Berlin, and in 2012 the globe’s top prize for my profession, the International Serious Play Awards Golden Medal for the best leadership game, in Seattle.

*Slide: FLIGBY’s simulation game main control panel for players*



When I heard about Flow and read Prof Csikszentmihalyi's book, *Good Business: Leadership, Flow, and the Making of Meaning*, I said, Flow is a great topic for my next serious simulation videogame. I did not know Prof Cs, but I contacted and visited him in California - to try to persuade him to cooperate with me/us in designing an interactive videogame simulation to help popularize and teach the relevance of his Flow theory for management/leadership.

I realized that both of us had a big challenge: my was to convince a traditional professor who wrote academic bestsellers to agree to work with me to find a new way to deliver and implant his obviously insightful advice to managers and leaders to help them to create for their co-workers a Flow-supporting work environment.

Frankly, initially, Prof. Cs. was not too motivated to help. In 2007 serious gaming business (and the gamification trend) had just started, and the first results did not seem too relevant for science. So first Prof. CS. was rather skeptical, but things turned for the better. At our initial meeting I showed him one of our earlier products (actually a project management simulation of a Himalaya expedition, and it turned out, that Prof. Cs. was a serious young mountaineer.

*Slide: Prof. Csikszentmihalyi as a mountaineer (shown)*

I think that, fortuitously, it helped to make him more cooperative, so our deal for Flow was finally done. Gradually he became an ever more supportive and involved partner, as he himself states in his contribution to our book being published today.

FLIGBY was the most challenging projects in my life. Not only from a technical point of view, but also developing the content required innovative approaches. A new way was needed because even though Csikszentmihalyi's *Good Business*, published a dozen years ago, had persuasive reasoning and many good suggestions, a gap remained on how to transplant, effectively, his ideas into the minds of current and future managers/leaders. The tool for this, I thought, was through serious gaming, hence FLIGBY.

Why CEU Business School? Personal contacts with local professors (to whom we have made our products free for a decade, including FLIGBY, *gratis*) helped us in several ways:

Their classroom experiences and intellects helped lift the Game to a higher level;

FLIGBY has been played by close to 10,000 players, yielding millions of skill-linked observations. This growing data bank is able -- and we are willing to support -- excellent opportunities to better understand managers/leaders' behaviors and the kinds of skills they need to be effective managers/leaders by following practices that are in accordance with the principles and values of Flow.

We have a symbiotic relationship, as increasingly found in the real world: academia (MCs – corporation (ALEAS) – academia (CEU).

The most recent product of this symbiotic relationship is the book being published today.

\* \* \*

Summarizing the experiences I learned through this project: three major lessons:

Lesson 1: Working with scientists is a real challenge but it also offers a magic source for inspiration and learning. Entrepreneurs are suspect to scientists and academics, but they should not be; if the cooperation is good, it can be a win-win situation.

Lesson 2: Flow is a complex thing. Flow seems to be an easy theory and not too difficult to practice, but in reality, it is far more complex than anything in the world of “5 minutes management” -- books and advice -- that proliferate to entice gullible managers.

Lesson 3: Pioneering innovations happen in teams. The FLIGBY ecosystem is a complex network of teams (Support providers, Researchers, Clients, Players) and Interesting characters (MCS, Paul, Zoli, MC).

END.



**The Authors: Zad Vecsey, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Paul Marer, Zoltan Buzady**

## **Brief bios of the main panelists, Nov 9, 2015 Forum on *Missing Link Discovered***

### **Paul Marer, Ph.D. ([marerp@business.ceu.edu](mailto:marerp@business.ceu.edu))**

Professor of International Business, Economics, Finance, and Management

CEU Business School, Budapest

Member, Board of Directors, "Leadership & Flow" Global Research Program

Born in Hungary; emigrated to the USA in 1956; a US citizen since 1961; and a dual US/Hungarian citizen since 2000. His M.A. and Ph.D. degrees are from University of Pennsylvania (Wharton School), concentrating on economics and business. Paul had a 25-year career as professor of business at the Kelley School of Business, Indiana University, Bloomington.

During 1987-89, at George Soros' request, he was involved in establishing the first business school in Central and Eastern Europe, the International Management Center (IMC), that later became CEU Business School. Paul moved to Hungary in 2000 to teach at CEU Business School, where he is full time faculty member, having served three terms as Academic Dean. Paul is the author or editor of 24 books and 150 articles and chapters, mainly on the changing economic and business situation in Hungary and in the other countries of CEE. He has an honorary doctorate from the Budapest University of Economic Sciences (1999).

### **Zoltan Buzady, Ph.D. ([buzadyz@business.ceu.edu](mailto:buzadyz@business.ceu.edu))**

Associate Professor of Management and Organizations, CEU Business School

Director, "Leadership & Flow" Global Research Program

Guided by the motto of "Learning, Leading, Leapfrogging", Zoltan has 25 years of experience with innovation at the interface of Self-development, Leadership, Cross-cultural Management and Strategy. He holds a Ph.D. in Strategic Management, an MBA from CASS Business School (UK), and a Law degree from the London School of Economics. The author of several global award-winning teaching case studies, Zoltan has extensive practical experience as a team and executive coach. His research and teaching specialties include: Leadership and Flow, Self-development and Change, Design Thinking and Organizational Development, Transactional Analysis Coaching, and World Class Leadership Development.

### **Zad Vecsey, MBA ([zad@aleasgroup.com](mailto:zad@aleasgroup.com))**

Co-founder and CEO

ALEAS Simulations, Inc.

Zad received a master degree in organizational sociology from Corvinus University and an MBA from the London Business School. He began his career in the legal and consulting unit of Coopers & Lybrand. Then he became managing director of IQ Consulting, Ltd, introducing and representing in Hungary such international brands as LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY as well as the *CDP on-line survey of European competitiveness*

Zad's enthusiastic mission as founder and CEO of ALEAS Simulations is to find innovative ways to teach leadership development via creative, "blended learning" video games. In this field he had earned the top prize in Hungary and later, in the EU, even before he embarked on creating FLIGBY, which had garnered the globe's top award in its category. Zad is the author of *On the Brink of Chaos*.

### **Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi**

Distinguished Prof of Psychology and Management

Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, California

Chairman, Board of Directors, "Leadership and Flow Global Research Program"

Born in Fiume, Italy (now Rijeka, Croatia) before World War II, to a Hungarian family. His Father was a Hungarian diplomat in Italy before, during, and after the War. His Dad first ran into serious trouble during the War, when Hungary became fascist, because as consul, he issued false passports (or visas) to Jews to make it possible for them to escape Nazi persecution. After the War he was named Hungary's ambassador to Italy. But when in 1948 the Communists, backed by the Red Army, took control of the country, the elder Csikszentmihalyi and his family remained in Italy as refugees. This is how Mihaly grew up in Fiume, Florence, and Rome, fluent in Hungarian, Italian, and German.

Wanting to study psychology at the university level -- a field that in Europe was taught only in medical schools -- he immigrated to the US at age 22. He was accepted by the prestigious University of Chicago, where he earned his BA in 1959, married writer Isabella Selaga in 1960, and was awarded a Ph.D. in psychology in 1965.

After a brief climb of the academic ladder at Lake Forest College at the outskirts of Chicago, he joined the psychology faculty of his *alma mater*, eventually becoming department head. At Chicago he had a chance to pursue the kinds of large-scale, survey-based, multi-year projects needed (the "Experience Sampling Method") to test his path-breaking research hypotheses.

Best-known for his theory of Flow, described in his seminal 1990 book, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. Quoting from it:

*People are happy when they are in a state of Flow, a type of intrinsic motivation that involves being fully focused and being 'fully present' in a situation or task. Flow is being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one, like playing jazz. Your whole being is involved, and you're using your skills to the utmost.*

Csikszentmihalyi's two dozen books and well over 100 articles have explored interconnections between (among others) Flow, creativity, the meaning of life, individual happiness, societal well-being, leadership and social responsibility, peak performance in sports, organizational efficiency, early childhood education, and how to maintain or regain Flow in old age.

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